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THE FLORENTINE HISTORY

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THE FLORENTINE HISTORY

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BOOK V

In the changes that they make, countries are wont to pass from order to disorder, and from disorder again to order; for as Nature never suffers the things of this world to come to a stay, so soon as they reach their ultimate perfection, there being nothing higher to which they can mount, they must needs descend; and, in like manner, when, in their downward course they have reached, through their disorders, their lowest point of degradation, since then they can descend no lower, they must needs rise. And always in this way from good we descend to evil, and from evil mount to good. For valour begets tranquillity, tranquillity ease, ease disorder, and disorder ruin. And conversely out of ruin springs order, from order valour, and thence glory and good fortune. Wherefore it has been noted by the discerning that letters follow after arms, and that in all countries and cities captains come before philosophers. For when good and well-disciplined arms have brought victories, and victories peace, the vigour of warlike minds can be corrupted by no more specious ease than that of letters; nor can ease find entrance into well-constituted States by any more seductive or more dangerous snare. And this was well understood by Cato, when of old the philosophers Diogenes and

Carneades came from Athens as envoys to the Roman Senate. For, seeing the Roman youth begin to follow them about admiringly, and knowing the harm that might result to his country from this specious idleness, he caused a law to be passed that thenceforward no philosopher should be received in Rome.

It is from these causes, therefore, that countries come to ruin; which being reached, men, taught wisdom by suffering, return again, as has been said, to order, unless indeed they remain strangled by some irresistible force. These were the causes which, first under the ancient Etruscans, and afterwards under the Romans, made Italy at one time happy, at another wretched; and though nothing was afterwards built upon the ruins of Rome that could supply her place (as under some heroic ruler might have been gloriously accomplished), nevertheless there arose in certain of the new Cities and States which grew out of those ruins so much excellence, that though no one of them established a supremacy over the rest, they yet lived together in such order and agreement as to be able to free and defend the country from the Barbarians. Among which States, that of the Florentines, if narrower than others in its dominion, has been nowise inferior to them in authority or power; nay, from its position in the centre of Italy, and from being wealthy and prompt to attack, has either successfully resisted wars made against it, or given victory to the side with which it took part. Wherefore, if from the excellence of these new States there came not times tranquil with enduring peace, there came none perilous from the asperities of war. For as we cannot call it peace where States are constantly assailing one

another in arms, so neither can that be termed war where men do not slay one another, where no cities are sacked, no Princedoms overthrown. For the wars of Italy were brought to such a degree of futility as to be entered on without fear, waged without danger, and ended without loss. Thus the valour which in other provinces is wont to be extinguished by prolonged peace, was quenched in Italy by the feebleness of her wars, as may clearly be understood from what I have to relate of events happening between the years 1434 and 1494, wherein it will be seen that in the end a path was reopened to the Barbarians, and Italy brought once more under their servitude. And if the things effected by our Princes abroad and at home cannot, like the achievements of the ancients, be read with wonder for their worth and greatness, they may perhaps be regarded with no less wonder in respect of other qualities, when it is seen how so many and such noble Peoples have been kept in subjection by arms so feeble and so badly organised. And if in writing of the things that happened in these times of decay, there be nothing to record of the valour of soldiers, conduct of captains, or patriotism of citizens, it will at least be seen what deceits, subtleties, and crafty devices have been employed by Princes, Soldiers, and Rulers of Republics to maintain for themselves a reputation they had done nothing to deserve. Which things it will perhaps be no less useful to know than those related of ancient times, since if the latter kindle generous minds to imitate their example, the others may lead them to shun or to correct them.

§ 2. To such a pass had Italy been brought by her

rulers, that whenever by the accord of Princes a peace was concluded, it was presently broken by the men whose arms they had employed; so that no glory was gained by war, no tranquillity by peace. Wherefore
1433. when peace was made in the year 1433 between the League and the Duke of Milan, the soldiery, desiring to remain on a war footing, turned their weapons against the Church.

There were at that time two great Companies of mercenaries in Italy, taking their names respectively from Braccio and Sforza, the latter commanded by Count Francesco, son of Sforza Attendolo, the former by Niccolò Piccinino and Niccolò Fortebraccio, under one or other of which Companies were ranged almost all the rest of the armed forces of Italy. Of the two that of Sforza was held in higher esteem, as well from the valour of Count Francesco, as from his having been promised by Filippo, Duke of Milan, his natural daughter, the Lady Bianca, in marriage, the prospect of which alliance made him be much considered. After the peace of Lombardy was concluded, both these armed Companies assailed Pope Eugenius, though for different causes—Niccolò Fortebraccio moved by the ancient enmity which Braccio had always borne against the Church, Count Francesco by ambition. Accordingly while Fortebraccio attacked Rome, the Count took possession of the March of Ancona. Whereupon the Romans, not desiring to be involved in war, drove Eugenius from their city. Escaping thence with difficulty and danger, he fled to Florence. Here, reflecting on the peril in which he stood, and seeing himself abandoned by all the Italian Powers, who would not for his sake resume those arms which, to their extreme

content, they had recently laid aside, the Pope made 1434.
terms with the Count, granting him the Signory of the March; and this, although to the injury of usurpation the Count had added insult. For in indicating to his agents the place whence he wrote, he would date, according to Italian usage, in Latin, *Ex Girifalco nostro Firmiano, invito Petro et Paulo.* Not content with this cession of territory, Count Francesco insisted on being appointed Gonfalonier of the Church, and so much more did Pope Eugenius dread a dangerous war than a humiliating peace that nothing he asked was refused him. Having thus become the Pope's friend, the Count turned his arms against Niccolò Fortebraccio, and between the two there ensued, within the territories of the Church, a series of encounters attended by varying success and lasting over many months, but occasioning more injury to the Pope and to his subjects than to those by whom the war was conducted. At last, through the mediation of the Duke of Milan, a truce was arranged between the rivals, whereby both of them remained Lords within Church territory.

§ 3. This war, extinguished in Rome, was rekindled in Romagna by Battista da Canneto, who having slain in Bologna certain of the family of the Grifoni, and expelled the Papal Governor together with other enemies of his own from that city, in order to retain the State by force of arms sought succour from Duke Filippo, while the Pope, to avenge the wrong done him, appealed to the Venetians and Florentines. Both obtained the aid they asked, and two great armies speedily entered Romagna. Niccolò Piccinino com-

1434. manded on behalf of Duke Filippo, while the forces of Venice and of Florence were led by Gattamelata and Niccolò da Tolentino. In a great battle fought near Imola, the Venetians and Florentines were routed, Niccolò da Tolentino being made prisoner and sent to Milan, where, whether from vexation at his defeat or through treachery on the part of the Duke, he died a few days after his arrival. On gaining this victory Filippo, either because he was weakened by recent wars, or because he believed that after the reverse the League had suffered it would discontinue its efforts, forbore to follow up his success, and thus gave the Pope and his allies time to reunite, when, choosing Count Francesco for their Captain, they sought to drive Niccolò Fortebraccio from the territories of the Church, and so terminate the war begun on the Pope's behalf. The Romans seeing the Pope in the field in such strength proposed terms, which being agreed to, they accepted a Commissary of his appointing. Among the towns possessed by Niccolò Fortebraccio were Tivoli, Montefiascone, Città di Castello, and Assisi. In this last-named stronghold Niccolò, unable any longer to keep the field, had taken refuge, and was now besieged by Count Francesco. The siege being protracted by Fortebraccio's stubborn defence, Duke Filippo saw that he must either prevent the League from obtaining this victory, or be prepared afterwards to defend his own dominions. Accordingly, to draw off Count Francesco from the siege, he ordered Niccolò Piccinino to pass through Romagna into Tuscany; whereupon the League, thinking it of more moment to guard Tuscany than capture Assisi, directed the Count to oppose the passage of Piccinino, who, with his army,

was already at Forlì. The Count consequently 1435.
marched with his troops to Cesena, leaving his brother Lione to conduct the war in the March, and protect his possessions. But while Piccinino was endeavouring to force a passage, and Count Francesco to prevent him, Fortebraccio attacked Lione, and, with great glory to himself, captured him, plundered his people, and, following up his victory, seized at one swoop many towns of the March. These reverses sorely vexed Count Francesco, who thought all his possessions lost to him. Wherefore, leaving a division of his forces to oppose Piccinino, he marched with the rest against Fortebraccio, whom he fought and defeated. In which battle Fortebraccio himself was wounded and made prisoner, dying afterwards of his wounds. This victory restored to the Pope all the towns taken from him by Fortebraccio, and forced the Duke of Milan to sue for peace, which was concluded through the mediation of Niccolò d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara. By the terms of this accord the towns the Duke had seized in Romagna were given back to the Church, and the Duke's soldiers recalled to Lombardy. As for Battista da Canneto, he shared the common fate of those whose rule is supported by the arms and valour of others. For when the Duke's troops were withdrawn from Romagna he fled at once, being unable unassisted to maintain himself in Bologna, whither Messer Antonio Bentivoglio, the head of the rival faction, now returned.

§ 4. All these events happened while Cosimo was in exile. After his return the citizens who had taken 1434.
part in restoring him, and all others who had suffered wrongs, of whom there were many, took thought how

1434. to secure their Government without scrupling as to the means. Accordingly the Signory, which came into office for the ensuing months of November and December, not content with what had been done by their predecessors on behalf of their party, prolonged the term and altered the place of exile of those already banished, and sent many into exile who had not been banished before. Nor was it so much that he belonged to the hostile faction that condemned a man, as his wealth, his family connections, and private friendships. This proscription, had it been accompanied by bloodshed, might have been likened to those of Octavianus and Sylla. And, indeed, it too was in some degree
1436. stained with blood. For Antonio, son of Bernardo Guadagni, was beheaded, while four other citizens, among them Zanobi dei Belfratelli and Cosimo Barbadori, who had quitted their place of exile and appeared in Venice, were seized by the Venetians (who thought more of Cosimo's friendship than of their own good name), cast into prison, and there foully done to death. That so powerful a Republic should thus truckle to the Florentines, gave great reputation to the Medicean cause and roused the utmost alarm among its enemies, though it was believed that the object of the Venetians was not so much to serve Cosimo, as to fan the flames of faction in Florence, and render our divisions more virulent by the shedding of blood. For the Venetians saw no obstacle to their own aggrandisement save in the unity of our city.

Florence being now freed from all who were hostile to, or suspected by, its rulers, these with a view to strengthen their party applied themselves to win over fresh adherents by acts of grace and favour; they

restored to their country the family of the Alberti, 1434.
and certain other exiles, and received all the Grandees, with hardly any exception, into the ranks of the Commons, distributing among them at a low valuation the possessions of those who remained in exile. Afterwards they fortified themselves with new laws and ordinances, and caused new scrutinies (*squittini*) to be prepared, removing the names of enemies from the ballot bags, and substituting those of friends. But warned by the downfall of their adversaries that these devices would not by themselves suffice to secure their Government, they determined that the Magistracies which had power given them over life and death should always be filled by leading men of their own party. To this end they ordained that the officers (*accoppiatori*) who were to preside over the imbursement of fresh names should have authority in conjunction with the old Signory to appoint the new. To the Eight of the Guard they gave authority to punish with death, and passed a law that no exile should be allowed to return on the expiry of his term of banishment without leave granted by thirty-four out of the thirty-seven of the Signory and Colleges. To write to, or receive letters from, an exile was prohibited; and every word, sign, or practice that in any way gave offence to the governing body, was punished with extreme rigour. And if there remained in Florence any obnoxious person whose case was not covered by these penalties, he was crushed under the new burdens laid upon him.

The new rulers, having by these measures in a short time driven out or impoverished the whole of the adverse faction, established themselves in secure

possession of the Government; while not to lack succour from without, and at the same time prevent others who might have designs against them from obtaining it, they entered into a league with the Pope, the Venetians, and the Duke of Milan for the defence of their dominions.

§ 5. While affairs in Florence were on this footing,
1435. Giovanna, Queen of Naples, died, having by will appointed René of Anjou to be her heir. Whereupon Alfonso, King of Aragon, who was then in Sicily, being on terms of friendship with many of the Neapolitan Barons, made preparations for seizing the Kingdom. Others of the Barons, however, and the people of Naples favoured René. The Pope, for his part, would not have either René or Alfonso to obtain possession, but desired that he himself should rule through a Governor of his own appointing. Meanwhile Alfonso landed in the Kingdom, where he was received by the Duke of Sessa, and where he enlisted several of the nobility in his service; for having already secured Capua, which was held in his name by the Prince of Taranto, he intended to force the Neapolitans to compliance. Accordingly he sent his fleet to attack Gaeta, which held out for René. The Neapolitans thereupon sought aid from the Duke of Milan, who invited the Genoese to undertake the enterprise; and they, partly to oblige the Duke their Lord, partly with a view to rescue the merchandise they had stored in their warehouses at Naples and Gaeta, fitted out a powerful fleet. Alfonso, hearing of this, strengthened his own fleet, and sailed in person to meet the enemy. In an action fought off the island of Ponza, the Aragonese fleet

was defeated, Alfonso with many of his Lords being captured and given by the Genoese into the hands of Duke Filippo. 1435.

This victory dismayed all those Princes of Italy who dreaded Filippo's power, for they thought it offered him a splendid opportunity to make himself master everywhere. But he, so widely do men differ in their judgments, took a course wholly contrary to what was expected. Alfonso, who was of singular sagacity, no sooner had audience of Filippo than he showed him how great a mistake he made in opposing him and supporting René. René, were he to become King of Naples, that he might have aid near, and not have to seek when in difficulties how to open a way to distant help, must needs do his utmost to secure Milan for the King of France. This he could only effect by Filippo's overthrow, and by making Lombardy a province of France. But were Alfonso to become King of Naples, since he feared no enemy but the French, he would be bound to love and favour, nay, even to obey, the power which could open a path for that enemy. In this way the title of King might be with Alfonso, but all real power and authority would rest with Filippo. Accordingly, it was for the Duke (unless indeed he preferred gratifying an ambitious craving to the security of his State), far more than for himself, to consider the danger of the one course and the advantage of the other; for in the one case he would be a Prince and independent; in the other, standing between two most powerful Princes, he must either lose his dominions, or live in constant anxiety, obeying these others like a slave. These words had such an effect on the mind of the Duke

1435. that, changing his purpose, he set Alfonso free, and sent him honourably attended to Genoa and thence to Naples. Arrived there, Alfonso passed over to Gaeta, which town on the first news of his liberation had been seized by certain Lords who favoured his cause.

§ 6. The Genoese on seeing how the Duke, without any thought for them, had set the King free, thus doing himself honour at their expense and risk (since he had the entire credit of the King's release, while all the odium resulting from his defeat and capture rested with them), were grievously offended.

When the city of Genoa lives in the enjoyment of its freedom, a ruler, who is styled Doge, is appointed by the free votes of the people, not as an absolute Prince, or to determine all things alone, but that as head of the State he may bring forward such matters as have to be settled by the Magistrates and Councils. The city, however, has many noble families so powerful that they can hardly be brought to obey the authority of the Magistrates. Most powerful of all are the Fregosi and Adorni, and it is from these two Houses that the divisions of this city, and the overthrow of its free institutions, have their origin; for contending with one another for the Dogeship, not by constitutional methods, but for the most part by force of arms, it follows that one of the factions is always in distress, the other in power. Nay, sometimes it happens that those who find themselves displaced call in foreign arms, and since they cannot rule their country themselves, subject it to the government of a stranger. Whence it has happened, and happens still, that those

who rule in Lombardy are commonly paramount in 1435.
Genoa, as was the case when Alfonso of Aragon was made prisoner. Among the foremost of the Genoese to bring about the subjection of their city to Filippo had been Francesco Spinola, who not long after he had enslaved his country became, as is common in like cases, distrusted by the Duke. Resenting this, he had chosen to go into an almost voluntary exile at Gaeta, and finding himself there at the time of the sea-fight with Alfonso, had borne himself valiantly in that engagement. By which new service he thought he had deserved so well of the Duke, that in requital he might, at the very least, be allowed to reside unmolested in Genoa. But finding that the Duke (who could not believe that a man who had not loved the liberty of his country should love him), continued to distrust him, he resolved to tempt fortune once more, and, at a stroke, restore freedom to his country and recover his own good name and safety; for he saw no way to reconciliation with his fellow-citizens unless the same hand that had wounded them were to supply the remedy and effect the cure. And noting the general resentment felt against the Duke for having set the King free, he judged the opportunity a fit one for putting his designs into execution. Wherefore he imparted them to some whom he knew to be of the same mind, and urged and persuaded them to follow him.

§ 7. The solemn festival of St. John the Baptist was now come, on which occasion Arismino, the new Governor sent by the Duke, was to make his entry into Genoa. Accompanied by Opicino, the retiring

1435. Governor, and by many Genoese citizens, Arismino was already within the city, when Francesco Spinola, seeing no time was to be lost, came forth in arms followed by all who were privy to his design, and descending to the piazza which lies in front of his palace, raised the cry of *Liberty*. With such marvellous alacrity did the citizens and people assemble on hearing this cry, that no one who from private interest or other motive was well affected to the Ducal Government had time to arm, nay, barely time to think whither he should flee. Arismino, and some of the Genoese who were with him, sought refuge in the citadel which stood out for the Duke. Opicino, believing he could save himself and encourage friends to act in their own defence by retreating to the palace, where he had two thousand armed men at his disposal, while making his way thither was slain before he reached the piazza, and his body, torn in many pieces, was trailed through the streets. The Genoese having thus brought back their city under the control of her free Magistrates, within a few days got possession of the citadel with other strong places held for the Duke, and completely shook off the Ducal yoke.

1436. § 8. Observing the course events had taken, the Princes of Italy, who before had been afraid that Duke Filippo was growing too powerful, began to think they might yet keep him in check; and notwithstanding the league recently entered into with him, the Florentines and Venetians now concluded a treaty with the Genoese. Whereupon Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi, and other chiefs of the Florentine exiles, seeing the waters troubled and the face of all things changed, formed

hopes of inducing the Duke to declare open war on Florence. They therefore repaired to Milan, and Messer Rinaldo addressed the Duke to this effect :— 1436.

'That we, who formerly were your enemies, should now come with confidence to entreat you to aid our return to our country, should surprise neither you nor any other who considers the mutability of human affairs and the fickleness of Fortune. As regards both our past and present conduct we may well and reasonably stand excused, both by you for what we did, and by our country for what we do. No fair-minded man will blame him who tries to defend his country in whatsoever way he can, and it never was our object to injure you, but only to guard our country from your injuries. The proof is, that when the tide of victory for our League was highest, so soon as we saw you disposed to conclude a true peace, we were more zealous for it than you yourself. We cannot therefore reproach ourselves with ever having done what should make us despair of obtaining any favour at your hands. Nor, again, can our country blame us if we now urge you to use against her those arms from which formerly we so stubbornly defended her. For that country, by which all its citizens are equally loved, alone deserves the love of all its citizens; not the country which lavishes affection on a chosen few to the exclusion of all the rest. Nor, in truth, are arms borne against one's own country always to be condemned. For cities, though they be composite bodies, yet bear a resemblance to simple bodies, and as in the latter diseases often occur which are only to be cured by iron or fire, so likewise in the former disorders frequently arise of a nature so grave that a good and

1436. loving citizen would sin more in leaving them untreated than in treating them, even, if need were, with iron. And what worse disorder than servitude can invade the body of a commonwealth, or what treatment more necessary than one that will remove it? Those wars are just which are necessary, and those arms sacred without which no hope remains. I know not what necessity could be greater than ours, nor what duty more sacred than to rescue our country from servitude. It is most certain, therefore, that our cause is both just and sacred, and must so be held both by us and you. Nor on your part will justification be wanting, seeing that after a peace concluded with so much solemnity the Florentines are not ashamed to league themselves with your rebellious subjects the Genoese. Wherefore, should our cause move you not, let resentment move you, and all the more that the enterprise is easy. For you must not be daunted by past instances wherein you have experienced the strength of this people, and their stubbornness in defending themselves, qualities which had they existed now in the same measure as formerly, might well afford ground for fear. You will now find the contrary of all this prevailing. For what vigour can be looked for from a city which has lately driven forth the greater part of her wealth and industries, or what firmness in a people divided by enmities at once so various and so new? From this disunion it results that even those riches which still remain in Florence can no longer be drawn upon as in former years; for men lavish their substance freely when they know they are spending for their own honour and glory and for the good of their country, in the hope that when peace

returns they will recover all that war has taken from 1436.
them; but not when they see themselves crushed in war and peace alike, having in the one to endure the outrages of their enemies, in the other the insolence of their rulers. Nay, a people is afflicted far more by the greed of fellow-citizens than by the rapacity of foes; for of this last it looks some day to see an end; of the other, never. In past wars, therefore, you directed your arms against an entire and united city, now you would direct them against a very small part of it. Formerly you came to wrest their State from many and good citizens; you would come now to take it from an evil few. Then you came to deprive a city of her freedom, now you would come to restore it. When the conditions are so unlike it were unreasonable to look for like results. On the contrary, there is ground to hope for certain victory. With Tuscany for your friend, and bound to you by ties of such efficacy that she will aid you more in your enterprises than Milan herself, it is easy to judge how much your State will be strengthened. And though at another time this conquest might be thought ambitious and violent, at the present moment it must be recognised as just and righteous. Suffer not, therefore, this opportunity to escape you, but believe that as former attempts against our city brought you only difficulties, discredit, and expense, the present will easily bring you substantial advantages and a splendid renown.'

§ 9. Many words were not needed to persuade the Duke to make war on the Florentines, for, moved before by hereditary hatred and a blind ambition, he was now smarting under the new wrong they had done him in

1436. coming to an accord with the Genoese. Nevertheless, the cost and danger he had incurred in former wars, and the recollection of recent losses and of vain hopes held out to him by exiles, made him hesitate. On hearing of the Genoese revolt, he had at once despatched Niccolò Piccinino, with all his men-at-arms and as many foot-soldiers as he could muster within his territories, to attempt the recovery of the town before the minds of the citizens became fixed, and the new government established; he also trusted much to the fortress within the city, garrisoned by his soldiers. But though Niccolò drove the Genoese from the heights, and took from them the valley of Pozeveri where they had entrenched themselves, and thus forced them back within the walls of the city, nevertheless the resolute spirit wherewith the citizens conducted their defence checked further progress, and compelled him to raise the siege. Whereupon, at the instance of the Florentine exiles, the Duke ordered him to invade the Riviera di Levante, and kindle as fierce a war as he could within the Genoese territority on the Pisan frontier, for he thought this movement would indicate to him from time to time the line he ought to follow. Niccolò accordingly attacked and took Sarzana, and, after inflicting much other injury, in order to excite still further the fears of the Florentines he advanced towards Lucca, giving out that he was on his way to Naples to assist the King of Aragon. In consequence of these fresh alarms Pope Eugenius left Florence and went to Bologna, where he attempted to bring about a new treaty between the Duke and the League, intimating to Filippo that unless he consented to his proposal, he (the Pope) would be forced to allow Count

Francesco, who was now in alliance with him and serving in his pay, to take part with the League. But though the Pope put himself to much trouble in the matter, all his efforts were vain. For the Duke would come to no terms unless Genoa submitted, while the League insisted that Genoa should remain free. Accordingly both sides, distrusting the continuance of peace, prepared for war. 1436.

§ 10. When Niccolò Piccinino came to Lucca, the Florentines, suspecting a new attack to be intended, sent Neri, son of Gino, with their men-at-arms to patrol the Pisan territory, and got leave from the Pope for Count Francesco to join him: the united forces then encamped at Santa Gonda. Piccinino, being now at Lucca, asked permission to pass onward to Naples, which being refused, he threatened to pass by force. In strength and leadership the armies were on an equality, for which reason, and also on account of the severity of the season, for it was now December, neither desired to risk the fortune of battle. They therefore allowed many days to go by without active hostilities. Niccolò Piccinino was first to stir, for on receiving information that were he to attack Vico Pisano by night he might easily take it, he made the attempt, but failing to get entrance laid waste the country round about, and sacked and burned the village of San Giovanni alla Vena.

This, though but a partial success, encouraged him to further activity, and all the more because he had observed that the Count and Neri made no move. He accordingly stormed and took Santa Maria in Castello, and Filetto. Even this, however, failed to

1437. set the Florentine troops in motion, not that the Count was afraid, but because, out of respect for the Pope, who was still negotiating for peace, war had not yet been declared by the Magistrates of Florence. The enemy, however, believing that what the Florentines did from prudence was done through fear, were incited to renewed efforts, and determined on storming Barga, against which town they moved with their entire army. This fresh provocation forced the Florentines to lay aside all scruples, and resolve not merely to succour Barga but to invade the territory of Lucca. Count Francesco therefore marched to meet Niccolò, and, encountering him under the walls of Barga, defeated him, and compelled him to withdraw from the siege in great disorder.

Meanwhile the Venetians, holding that the Duke had broken treaty, sent their Captain, Gian Francesco da Gonzaga, to Ghiaradadda, who laying waste the Duke's territory forced him to recall Niccolò Piccinino from Tuscany. This recall, combined with the Count Francesco's victory, emboldened the Florentines to undertake an expedition against Lucca, and with good hopes of success; for in entering on this enterprise they felt neither fear nor scruple, seeing that the Duke, of whom alone they stood in awe, was kept in play by the Venetians, while the citizens of Lucca, who had welcomed the enemies of Florence to their town and allowed them to make their attacks, could have no right to complain.

§ 11. Wherefore, in April of the year 1437, the Count set his army in march. But before assailing others, the Florentines desired to recover what was their own,

and retook Santa Maria in Castello, and every other 1437.
town that had been seized by Piccinino. Then, turning into the territory of Lucca, they attacked Camajore, whose inhabitants, though loyal to their Lords, gave themselves up, being more moved by fear of near enemies than by fidelity to distant friends. Massa and Sarzana were also retaken with equal ease. After which successes the army, about the end of May, moved towards Lucca, destroying as it went all the grain and other crops, burning country houses, cutting down trees and vines, carrying off cattle, and, in short, leaving nothing undone that it is usual or possible to do against an enemy. Meanwhile the citizens of Lucca, seeing themselves forsaken by the Duke, and despairing of being able to protect the open country, abandoned it, and set about strengthening their city with ramparts and all other suitable defences. Nor, inasmuch as the town was full of defenders, did they doubt being able to hold out for a long time, and, taught by their experience of other attempts made against them by the Florentines, it was to time they trusted. Their only fear arose from the fickle temper of the populace, who, when wearied out by the siege, might come to think more of their own danger than of the independence of their country, and so force on a disadvantageous and disgraceful peace. Wherefore, to give them better heart for the defence, they assembled them in the piazza, and one of the oldest and wisest among the citizens spoke to them to this effect :—

'You must know full well that actions done under necessity can not and ought not to be either praised or blamed. Should you, however, censure us under the belief that we have brought upon ourselves the war that

1437. is now being waged against us, by receiving the Duke's soldiers as our guests and allowing them to assail the Florentines, you would be grievously mistaken. With what inveterate hostility the Florentines regard you is known to you all, and that this has been caused, not by any wrongs you have done them, nor by any fears they have of you, but simply by your weakness and their ambition; for the one gives them hopes of being able to oppress you, the other incites them to do so. Nor are you to suppose that any friendly behaviour on your part would avert this their desire, or that any offence you might give them would stir them to injure you more. It is their constant thought to deprive you of freedom; it is for you to consider how you can defend it. What they and we may do to secure our respective aims, all may lament, but none can wonder at. We lament that they are attacking us, that they are storming our towns, burning our dwellings, devastating our lands. But who among us is so simple as to be surprised at these things? For were it in our power we should do the like, or worse, to them. Assume that they have begun this war in consequence of Niccolò having come among us; yet had he not come they would have begun it on some other plea; and had the evil been deferred, it might perhaps have been greater. It is not then this coming that is to be blamed, but rather our untoward fortune and their ambitious nature; for we could not refuse the Duke admission for his soldiers, and once admitted, it was impossible for us to restrain them from making war. You know that without the aid of some powerful ally we cannot defend ourselves, and that there is no power that can defend us with more fidelity and vigour than the Duke. He

restored our liberty; it stands to reason that he should 1437.
maintain it for us. Of our perpetual enemies he has always been the inveterate foe. If to avoid harming the Florentines we had given offence to him, we should have lost our friend, and made our enemy stronger and better prepared to harm us. So that it is far better for us to have this war, retaining the Duke's love, than to have peace, incurring his displeasure; for we may believe that if we are true to ourselves he will extricate us from the dangers in which he has involved us. You know with what fury the Florentines have more than once attacked us, and with what glory we have defended ourselves against them; and that frequently we have had no hope save in God and in Time, and that both have preserved us. But if we defended ourselves then, what reason is there why we should not defend ourselves now? Then all Italy had abandoned us to them as a prey; now we have the Duke for us, and may assume that the Venetians, who have no wish to see the power of Florence increase, will be slow to take part against us. On former occasions the Florentines were less hampered, had better hope of assistance, and were stronger in themselves, while we in every respect were feebler than now; for then we had to defend a tyrant, whereas now we defend ourselves. The glory of the defence was then another's, now it is our own. Then our enemies attacked us in unison, but now, all Italy being filled with their exiles, they come against us disunited. But even without these reasons to encourage us, a last necessity should make us stubborn to resist. All enemies are rightly to be feared, since all seek their own glory and your ruin. But beyond all others we should dread the Florentines, for neither

1437. obedience, nor tribute, nor sovereignty over our city will satisfy them. Our lives and our substance are what they desire, that they may glut their cruelty with our blood, their avarice with our possessions. Wherefore all of us, whatsoever our station, should look on them with fear. Be not moved therefore by the sight of wasted fields, of country houses burned, and villages occupied, for if we save our city these too will be saved; while, if we lose it, their preservation will nothing avail us. Should we maintain our liberty, it will be hard for our enemy to keep possession of these things; losing our liberty, we should possess them in vain. To arms, then! and while you fight remember that the safety, not of your country only, but likewise of your homes and children, is the reward of victory.' The closing words of the speaker so kindled the spirit of the people that they declared with one accord they would die sooner than surrender, or consent to terms that in any degree compromised their freedom. Afterwards they made among themselves all arrangements necessary for defending a city.

§ 12. Meanwhile the army of the Florentines had not been idle, but after laying waste the open country had taken Monte Carlo on terms, and then moved on to besiege Uzano, in order that the Lucchesi, shut in on all sides, might despair of succour, and be starved into surrender. The fortress of Uzano, however, was extremely strong, and strongly garrisoned, so that its reduction was not so easy as elsewhere had been the case.

The citizens of Lucca, on finding themselves thus menaced, had, as might be expected, recourse to the

Duke, whom they urged by every kind of argument, 1437.
smooth or rough, to take their part, now pointing to their own past services, now to the offences of the Florentines; reminding him with what courage he would inspire other friends by undertaking their defence, and what fears he must arouse should he leave them undefended. If with their liberty they also lost their lives, he would stand dishonoured among his friends, and lose credit with all those who for his sake might hereafter be called upon to expose themselves to danger. And lest his obligations should not move him, that pity might, to words they added tears, until the Duke, stirred both by his ancient hatred of the Florentines and by the recent services of the Lucchesi, but above all desiring that Florence should not be aggrandised by so important a conquest, decided either to send a great army into Tuscany, or to assail the Venetians with such fury as must force the Florentines to abandon their own enterprise and hasten to assist their allies.

§ 13. This decision come to, it soon became known in Florence that the Duke was about to send troops into Tuscany, whereupon the Florentines began to lose hope of succeeding against Lucca. But that the Duke might find his hands full in Lombardy, they exhorted the Venetians to press him with all the forces at their disposal. The Venetians, however, had themselves been disheartened by the Marquis of Mantua deserting them to take service with the Duke, and being thus as it were disarmed, they answered that, so far from increasing their efforts, they would be unable to maintain them unless Count Francesco were sent them to com-

1437. mand their army, binding himself to cross the Po in person. Nor would they abide by the old covenants, under which he was not required to cross that river, but insisted that without a leader they would not make war, that they could trust no leader but the Count, but would not employ him unless he undertook to carry on the war everywhere. The Florentines saw that the war must be prosecuted vigorously in Lombardy; on the other hand they knew that, were they left without the Count, the enterprise against Lucca must be given up; and they very well knew that the Venetians made their request, not so much from any need they had of the Count's services, as to hinder Florence from achieving this conquest. The Count, for his part, was ready to enter Lombardy if called on to do so by the League, but he objected to any new condition of service, not choosing to destroy his hopes of the alliance promised him by the Duke. Thus the Florentines were distracted between two contending passions—the desire to possess Lucca, and the fear of war with the Duke. But, as always happens, fear prevailed, and they consented that, after taking Uzano, Count Francesco should proceed to Lombardy. There remained, however, the further difficulty which, as it lay not with them to remove, troubled the Florentines more, and caused them more anxiety than the first. The Count would not cross the Po, and the Venetians would not have him for their Captain unless he agreed to do so. Seeing no way to come to an accord save by each making concessions to the other, the Florentines persuaded the Count to write a letter to the Signory of Florence binding himself to cross the said river. A private promise, they said, would not affect public

covenants, so that afterwards he might decline to cross; meanwhile this advantage would result, that war once kindled, the Venetians would be under a necessity to continue it, and so be diverted from their present alarming temper. To the Venetians, on the other hand, they declared that this private letter was sufficient to bind the Count, and should therefore satisfy them; that, so far as possible, it would be well for them to respect the Count's scruples in regard to his father-in-law; and that it was neither for his interest nor theirs, without clear cause to the contrary, to disclose what he had agreed to. In this way it was settled that the Count should proceed to Lombardy. Accordingly, after taking Uzano, and throwing up certain breastworks round Lucca to keep the Lucchesi shut in, and after handing over the conduct of the war to the Commissaries, the Count crossed the mountains and went to Reggio, where the Venetians, who distrusted his intentions, in order to ascertain what these really were, at once required him to cross the Po and join their other forces. This he positively refused to do, when high words passed between him and Andrea Mauroceno, the Venetian envoy, each accusing the other of arrogance and bad faith. After many protests made on both sides—by the Count that he was under no covenant to serve the Venetians, by the envoy that he would not pay him, the Count returned to Tuscany, the other to Venice. The Florentines quartered the Count in the Pisan territory, and hoped to induce him to renew the war against the Lucchesi. To this, however, they did not find him disposed. For the Duke, on learning that out of regard for him the Count had refused to cross the Po, thought that through 1437.

1437. him he might also save the Lucchesi, and requested his good offices to arrange a treaty of peace between the Florentines and them, in which, if possible, he (the Duke) should be included; and he held out hopes to the Count that when he pleased he might marry his daughter. This alliance was a strong inducement to Count Francesco, who hoped that, as the Duke had no male issue, he might thereby become Lord of Milan. For which reason he constantly cut short the warlike proposals of the Florentines, saying that he would not stir unless the Venetians made good the pay he was entitled to, and continued his engagement; but that payment alone would not satisfy him, for, it being his desire to live in secure enjoyment of his own possessions, he must have further support than that of the Florentines, and if thrown over by the Venetians must do what was best for himself, thus covertly threatening to come to terms with the Duke.

1438. § 14. These cavils and chicaneries greatly displeased the Florentines, who saw their enterprise against Lucca ruined, and at the same time were alarmed for the safety of their own dominions, should the Duke and Count come to terms. Thinking his reputation might influence the Venetians to maintain their engagement with the Count, Cosimo de' Medici now went to Venice, where in the Venetian Senate House he spoke on the matter at length, showing the position in which Italy stood, what were the forces of the Duke, and what the strength, supposed or real, of the other States; and wound up by saying that, should the Count join the Duke, the Venetians must go back to the sea, and the Florentines struggle for their free-

dom. To which the Venetians answered that they 1438.
knew both their own strength and that of the other Italians, and believed they were well able to defend themselves; it was not their custom to pay soldiers who were serving under others, and it was for the Florentines to pay the Count, since it was they who had his services. For the secure enjoyment of their dominions they thought it more necessary to lower the Count's pride than to pay him, for men set no bounds to their ambition, and if on this occasion he were to be paid without having served, he would presently make some other demand still more unjust and dangerous. To them, therefore, it seemed necessary to curb his insolence at once, and not let it grow to such a pitch as to become incorrigible. If, however, the Florentines through fear, or from any other motive, desired to keep him their friend, let them pay him themselves.

Cosimo, therefore, returned without any settlement being come to. Nevertheless the Florentines did all they could to prevent the Count from separating himself from the League. This he was indeed loth to do; but his desire to conclude his marriage kept him in suspense, so that the merest accident might, as in fact happened, decide what course he should follow. He had left Furlano, one of his chief *condottieri*, in charge of his possessions in the March. This man was prevailed upon by the Duke to join him, and renounce the Count's service. Whereupon the Count, alarmed as to what might befall him, and disregarding every other consideration, made terms with the Duke, whereby, among other covenants, the latter bound himself not to interfere in the affairs of Romagna and

1438. Tuscany. After concluding this agreement Count Francesco earnestly advised the Florentines to arrange matters with the Lucchesi, putting forward such strong reasons that, seeing no other course open, they, in the month of April 1438, concluded a treaty under which the Lucchesi preserved their freedom, while Monte Carlo and certain others of their strongholds were retained by Florence. Afterwards the Florentines sent letters over all Italy full of lamentations, setting forth that, as God and man had willed that the Lucchesi should not come under their rule, they had made peace with them. And seldom is any man so much vexed on losing what is his own, as they at this time on failing to possess themselves of what was another's.

1436. § 15. During the time the Florentines were engaged on this momentous enterprise, they were not without thought for their neighbours, and for the adornment of their city. Niccolò Fortebraccio, as has been mentioned, was dead. He had married a daughter of the Count of Poppi. While Fortebraccio lived the Count had held and governed the town and fortress of Borgo San Sepolcro in the name of his son-in-law, and on his death continued to hold them as his daughter's dower, refusing to surrender them to the Pope, who, claiming them as having been usurped from the Church, sent the Patriarch with troops to recover them. The Count of Poppi, seeing he could not resist this attack, offered the town to the Florentines, who would not accept it. On the Pope's return to Florence, the Florentines intervened to bring about an arrangement between him and the Count. Difficulties, however, arising in the course of the negotiations, the Patriarch invaded the Casentino,

and taking Pratovecchio and Romena, offered these towns to the Florentines, which offer was likewise declined unless the Pope consented to their being handed over to the Count of Poppi. To this the Pope, after much controversy, agreed, on the Florentines promising to use their influence with the Count to have Borgo San Sepolcro restored to the Church. 1436.

The Pope's mind being thus quieted, the Florentines thought it a suitable opportunity to ask him to consecrate in person the Cathedral Church of their city, formerly named Santa Reparata, the building of which, having been begun long before, was now sufficiently advanced to allow the celebration of the sacred offices. To this request the Pope willingly consented; whereupon, to confer greater lustre on the city and on the Cathedral, and do more honour to the Pope, a platform was erected from Santa Maria Novella, where the Pope lodged, to the Church he was to consecrate, four cubits in breadth and two in height, covered above and at the sides with the finest cloth, on which the Pope and his retinue only, with such of the Magistrates and citizens as were appointed to accompany him, were allowed to walk, all the rest of the citizens and populace being gathered in the streets, the houses, and in the Church itself to witness the magnificent spectacle. When all the ceremonies wont to be observed on such occasions had been performed, His Holiness, as a mark of special favour, conferred knighthood on Giuliano Davanzati, Gonfalonier of Justice, and at all times a most distinguished citizen; to whom the Signory likewise, not to seem less gracious than the Pope, conceded the Captainship of Pisa for a year.

1439. § 16. In those days there were differences between the Roman and Greek Churches, occasioning diversity in celebrating the rites of religion. Much having been said on this subject by the Prelates of the Western Church at the latest Council held at Basle, it was resolved to use every effort to bring the Greek Emperor and Prelates to a new Council, likewise to be assembled there, that it might be seen whether they could not come to an agreement with the Church of Rome. And although this proposal touched the dignity of the Greek Emperor, while any concession to the Roman Pontiff hurt the pride of the Greek Prelates, nevertheless being hard pressed by the Turks, and knowing they could not defend themselves without assistance, in order that they might ask help with better assurance of its being granted, they determined to submit. Accordingly the Emperor, along with the Patriarch and the other Greek Prelates and Princes, came to Venice, on their way to the Council to be held at Basle. But being deterred by the plague from going to that city, they resolved to adjust their differences in the city of Florence, where, when the Roman and Greek Prelates had met together for many days in the Cathedral, the Greeks after much and long disputation gave way, and came to an accord with the Roman Church and Pontiff.

1438. § 17. After peace had been concluded between the Florentines and the Lucchesi, and between the Count and the Duke, it was fondly believed that the arms of Italy, and those especially which had afflicted Lombardy and Tuscany, might now be laid aside; for as to the arms wherewith René of Anjou and Alfonso of Aragon

were contending for the Kingdom of Naples, they could only be laid aside on the overthrow of one or other of the rivals. And although the Pope remained ill-pleased at having lost many of his towns, and the ambitious aims of the Duke and the Venetians were recognised, nevertheless it was assumed that the Pope from necessity, the others from weariness, had been brought to a stay. But matters took a different turn, for as neither the Duke nor the Venetians were satisfied, they once more resorted to arms, and Lombardy and Tuscany were again plunged in warfare. The haughty spirit of the Duke could not endure the Venetians being in possession of Bergamo and Brescia; still less when he saw them in arms, and every day raiding and ravaging his territories in all directions; for he thought himself strong enough not merely to hold them in check, but also, should they at any time be deserted by the Pope, the Florentines, and the Count, to recover from them his lost towns. His design therefore was to take Romagna from the Pope, judging that when he had got it, the Pope would no longer be in a position to harm him; while the Florentines, seeing the conflagration near, would through fear for themselves abstain from moving, or if they moved would be unable to attack him to advantage. The resentment felt by the Florentines against the Venetians arising out of the affair of Lucca was also known to the Duke, who assumed that for this reason Florence would be less ready to arm in defence of Venice; while, as regards the Count Francesco, the Duke believed that renewed friendship and hopes of a family connection would keep him steady. But to escape responsibility, and give less occasion for any one 1438.

1438. to be on the alert, and still more because he was bound by his covenant with the Count not to attack Romagna, he contrived that Niccolò Piccinino should engage in this enterprise as though moved by his own personal ambition.

At the time when the accord between the Duke and the Count was arranged, Niccolò was in Romagna, where, in complicity with the Duke, he gave out that he was much displeased with the friendship contracted between the Duke and his own perpetual enemy the Count, and at once withdrew with his troops to Camurata, which lies between Forlì and Ravenna. Here he fortified himself as though he meant to stay a long time, or, at any rate, until he found a new engagement.

The report of his ill-humour having been spread everywhere, Niccolò wrote to the Pope how great had been his services to the Duke, with what ingratitude they had been requited, and how the Duke had persuaded himself that having at his disposal almost the whole force of Italy, under her two best Captains, he could make himself master of the entire country. But that of the two Captains on whom the Duke relied, His Holiness might, if he pleased, make one an enemy to the Duke, the other useless to him; for were the Pope to provide him (Niccolò) with money, and support him in arms, he would attack those States usurped from the Church by Count Francesco, who being thus compelled to attend to his own affairs would be unable to aid Filippo in his ambitious schemes.

Thinking these statements probable in themselves, the Pope believed them, sent Niccolò five thousand ducats, and made him lavish promises of estates to be

conferred on him and his sons. And though warned by many of the snare, the Pope would not see it, nor hearken to any who took a contrary view. Niccolò perceiving there was no time to be lost in carrying out his enterprise (for meanwhile his son Francesco, to the great discredit of the Pope, had sacked Spoleto), resolved to attack Ravenna, either as reckoning its capture easy, or in consequence of some secret understanding with Ostasio da Polenta who governed the city for the Church. Within a few days after assailing it he obtained its surrender on terms. Following up this success, he took Bologna, Imola, and Forlì, and, what was most astonishing, of twenty strongholds held in these States for the Pope, there was not one that did not fall into Niccolò's hands. Nor was it enough to have wrought all this mischief to the Pope, but, to mock him with words as well as deeds, Niccolò must needs write to tell him that he had deservedly deprived him of his towns, seeing that His Holiness, by filling Italy with reports that he had deserted the Duke and gone over to the Venetians, had shamelessly attempted to sever the old friendship existing between himself and the Duke. 1438.

§ 18. Having taken possession of Romagna, Niccolò left it in charge of his son Francesco, and marched to Lombardy with the greater part of his forces, where, joining the rest of the Ducal army, he invaded and quickly occupied the whole of the country round Brescia. He then laid siege to the city itself.

The Duke, who desired that the Venetians should be left him for a prey, made excuses to the Pope, the Florentines, and the Count, declaring that what had

1438. been done in Romagna, if in contravention of covenants, was also contrary to his wishes, and through secret messengers gave it to be understood that, when time and occasion served, this disobedience on the part of Niccolò would be signally chastised. The Florentines and the Count gave no credence to these assertions, but believed, what in truth was the case, that Niccolò's arms had been set in motion by the Duke merely to divert attention while he was preparing for the overthrow of the Venetians, who thinking in their pride they could by themselves withstand the Ducal forces, disdained to ask aid from any one, and carried on the war with Gattamelata for their Captain. Had not the recent occurrences in Romagna and Lombardy kept him back, Count Francesco would have wished, with the approval of the Florentines, to go to the assistance of King René. The Florentines too would willingly have supported René, in consideration of the ancient friendship which their city had always maintained with the House of France. The Duke, on the other hand, would have been disposed to favour Alfonso, by reason of the friendship they had formed while the latter was in captivity. But all, being busied with wars close at hand, abstained from distant enterprises.

1439. The Florentines, therefore, seeing Romagna occupied and the Venetians beaten by the Ducal forces, warned by the ruin of others to fear for themselves, besought the Count to come to Tuscany and there consider with them what should be done to oppose the forces of the Duke, stronger now than ever before; whose insolence, they asserted, unless it were in some way checked, every power in Italy would soon be made to

feel. The Count knew the fears of the Florentines to be reasonable; but his anxiety for an alliance with the Ducal House kept him in suspense, and Filippo, who was well aware of this ambition, held out the fairest hopes that it would be gratified should the Count refrain from arming against him. Nay, the damsel being now marriageable, he more than once went so far as to make all needful preparations for celebrating the wedding, which afterwards, on some trifling pretext, came to nothing. Now, however, to encourage Count Francesco to think better of his prospects, Filippo sent him thirty thousand florins, the sum he was bound to pay him under the deed of betrothal. 1439.

§ 19. Nevertheless the war of Lombardy went on growing; every day the Venetians lost new towns; the troops they sent by river to the seat of war were defeated by the Duke's soldiers; the country round Brescia and that round Verona were occupied, and these cities themselves so closely invested that it was generally believed they could hold out only a little while longer. The Marquis of Mantua, who for many years had been the Condottiere of the Venetian Republic, had, greatly to their surprise, deserted his old employers and taken service with the Duke; so that what at the beginning of the war their pride would not permit them, in its progress their fear constrained them to do. For perceiving that they had no resource save in the Count and the Florentines, they began to solicit their friendship, though with shame and diffidence, fearing that the Florentines might answer as they themselves had done regarding the enterprise against Lucca and the affairs of the Count.

1439. They found them, however, kinder than they had dared to hope, or than their own conduct deserved; so much did hatred of an ancient enemy outweigh resentment against an old and habitual friend. Having for some time past foreseen the straits to which the Venetians were likely to be reduced, the Florentines had already warned the Count that the ruin of Venice would also be his; that he was deceived if he supposed that Duke Filippo when prosperous would think more of him than he had done when in distress; that the fear in which the Duke stood of him was the true cause of his promising him his daughter, and since those promises which necessity compels us to make, only necessity will enforce, the Duke must be kept under this necessity, which could only be done through the greatness of the Venetians. He should therefore reflect that if the Venetians were forced to relinquish their dominion on the mainland, he would lose not merely the advantages he might draw from them directly, but also all those which through fear of them he might obtain from others. And if he well considered the various States of Italy he would see that this one was poor, that other hostile; nor, indeed, as he himself had often said, were even the Florentines standing alone strong enough to maintain him. So that in every way it should be his aim to keep the Venetians powerful on the mainland. These persuasions, added to the hatred which the Count had now conceived against the Duke, by whom he thought he had been fooled in the matter of his marriage, induced him (though still without pledging himself to cross the Po) to agree to a covenant, signed in February 1438, whereby the Venetians bound themselves to contribute two-thirds, and the Florentines

one-third, of the cost of the war, and both engaged at 1439.
their own expense to protect the Count's possessions in the March.

In addition to their own forces the League enlisted in their service the Lord of Faenza, the sons of Messer Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini, and Pietro Giampaolo Orsino; but though they held out large promises to the Marquis of Mantua they could not detach him from the friendship and pay of the Duke. The Lord of Faenza also, after his engagement had been signed by the League, obtaining better terms from Filippo, went over to his side; a defection which made the League lose hope of speedily settling the affairs of Romagna.

§ 20. Lombardy likewise was beset by dangers; for Brescia was so closely invested by the Duke's troops that it might be expected any day to surrender from famine; Verona likewise was so hard pressed that for it also the same fate was to be feared; and were either of these two cities to fall, further preparations for war would be useless, and the cost hitherto incurred so much lost money. For which there was seen to be no sure remedy save that Count Francesco should pass into Lombardy. But here three difficulties had to be met: first, to prevail on the Count to cross the Po, and carry war wherever necessary; second, the belief of the Florentines that without the Count they would be wholly at the mercy of the Duke, who might easily retire into his strong places, and, keeping the Count at bay with a part of his forces, send the rest accompanied by the exiles, of whom the Florentine Government stood in extreme fear, into Tuscany. The third

1439. difficulty was as to the route the Count should take so as to arrive safely with his troops in the Paduan territory where the Venetian forces were assembled. Of the three difficulties, the second, which concerned the Florentines, was the most serious. Nevertheless recognising the urgency of the case, and worn out by the importunity of the Venetians, who obstinately insisted on the Count's presence among them, declaring that without him they must yield themselves up, the Florentines postponed their own fears to the necessities of others. There still remained the question as to the route, which it was decided should be made secure by the Venetians. And inasmuch as Neri, son of Gino Capponi, had been sent to discuss these arrangements with the Count, and persuade him to pass into Lombardy, the Signory, to render the concession more acceptable to the Venetian Senate, directed him afterwards to proceed to Venice, to settle what route the Count should take and arrange for his safe passage.

§ 21. Neri, accordingly, set out from Cesena, and came by boat to Venice; and never was any Prince received with so great honour as he by the Signory of that Republic; for they believed that upon his coming, and upon what was to be arranged and settled through him, depended the salvation of their Empire. Being conducted into the presence of the Senate, he addressed the Doge to this effect: 'Most Serene Highness, my Lords in Florence have always been of the opinion that the aggrandisement of the Duke of Milan would be the ruin of this and of their own Republic, whereas in your greatness and ours lies the safety of both our

States. Had your Senate thought as we do, we should 1439.
now find ourselves better off than we are, and your country would have been saved from the dangers that at present threaten it. But as you did not, when you ought, accord us either aid or confidence, we could not promptly supply those remedies which your disorder needs; nor could you be forward to demand them of us, having little understood us either in your adversity or prosperity, not knowing our nature to be such that him whom we once love we love always, and he whom we once hate is for ever our enemy. The love we have borne to your most Serene Signory you yourselves must know; for more than once, to afford you succour, you have seen Lombardy overflow with our money and troops. The hatred we bear Filippo, and shall always bear his House, is known to the whole world. Nor can it be that a love or a hatred of such old standing should readily be cancelled by new benefits or by new injuries. We were, and are, well assured that in this war we might stand aloof, to the Duke's extreme satisfaction, and with no great risk to ourselves. For even were he by your overthrow to become Lord of Lombardy, so much life would still be left in Italy that we should have no reason to despair of our safety; for increase of power and dominion brings with it increase of enmities and envy, whence war and loss are wont afterwards to follow. We know what heavy charges we should escape, what imminent perils avoid, by keeping clear of the present wars; and we also know that any movement we may make is likely to transfer to Tuscany the campaign which is now being carried on in Lombardy.

'Yet all these considerations are banished by our

1439. ancient affection for your Republic, and we have resolved to aid your country with the same readiness wherewith, were it attacked, we should defend our own. Wherefore, holding it as before everything else necessary to relieve Verona and Brescia, and judging that without the Count this cannot be done, my Lords have sent me, first, to persuade him (for you know that by his covenant he is not bound to cross the Po), to pass into Lombardy and make war wherever it must be made; and to this I have persuaded him, pressing upon him all those arguments whereby we ourselves are moved. And he, as he seems invincible in arms, so would not be outdone in courtesy, but has chosen to surpass that generosity which he sees used by us to you (for he well knows in what dangers Tuscany will be left on his departure), and learning that we have postponed our perils to your safety, he too has consented to postpone all private considerations to the same end.

'I come therefore to offer you the services of the Count, with seven thousand horsemen and two thousand foot, prepared to march against the enemy wherever he may be called upon to go. And I pray you well, as my Lords and the Count do likewise pray you, that as the number of these troops is in excess of what he is bound to supply, you on your part will recompense him with your wonted liberality, that he may not repent of having come into your service, or we of having persuaded him to do so.'

Neri's speech was listened to by the Venetian Senate with as much attention as though his words had been the words of an oracle; and his hearers were so greatly moved by it that they would not wait, according to

custom, until the Doge made answer, but standing up, 1439.
most of them in tears, with outstretched hands thanked the Florentines for their loving zeal, and Neri for the diligence and promptitude wherewith he had carried out his mission; protesting that no length of time should ever efface this obligation, not from *their* hearts only, but from those of their descendants; and that always henceforth their country should belong as much to the Florentines as to themselves.

§ 22. After this enthusiasm had calmed down, the road the Count should take was discussed, so that it might be levelled, provided with bridges, and in every way secured. There were four routes: one from Ravenna along the coast, but as most part of it lay between the shore and the marshes, this was not approved. The second was the most direct, but was obstructed by a fort named Uccellino, which was held for the Duke and must be reduced before a passage could be effected, whereby so much time would be lost as would destroy the opportunity of rescue, which demanded promptness and celerity. The third lay through the forest of Lugo; but from the Po having overflowed its banks, this route was not merely difficult but impracticable. There remained a fourth way through the open country of Bologna, crossing the bridge of Puledrano, and leading by Cento, Pieve, and between Finale and Bondeno, to Ferrara, whence, partly by water and partly by land, the troops could be transported into the Paduan territory and there join the forces of the Venetians. This last route, though beset by many difficulties, and open in some points to attacks from the enemy, was chosen as the least

1439. objectionable, and having been indicated to the Count as the one he was to follow, he set out with all speed and reached the Paduan territory on the 20th June. The arrival of their Captain in Lombardy filled Venice and all her dominions with high hopes, and whereas before this the Venetians had seemed to despair of safety, they now began to look forward to fresh conquests. The Count's first object was to proceed to the relief of Verona. To prevent him, Niccolò advanced with his army to Soave, a fortress standing between the Vicentine and Veronese territories, and surrounded by a great ditch extending from the fortress itself to the marshes of the Adige. Seeing the road across the plain thus obstructed, the Count resolved to make his way to Verona over the mountains, judging that Niccolò would either think it impossible that he should take this route, it being rough and steep, or, thinking it possible, would be too late to stop him. Accordingly, providing his troops with rations for eight days, he crossed the mountains and descended on the plain beyond Soave. And although certain works had been thrown up by Niccolò to hinder the Count's advance by this way also, they were insufficient to prevent it. Whereupon, finding that, contrary to what seemed possible, the Count had effected a passage, Niccolò, to avoid fighting at a disadvantage, retired beyond the Adige, while the Count without further hindrance entered Verona.

§ 23. Having happily accomplished his first task by the relief of Verona, it now remained for him to succour Brescia. This city lies so near the lake of Garda that, although invested by land, supplies may

readily reach it by water. To prevent this the Duke 1439.
at the outset of his successes had strengthened his forces on the lake, and occupied all those fortresses which from their proximity might be serviceable to Brescia. The Venetians still had galleys on the lake, but not in sufficient number to contend with the Duke's forces. The Count therefore thought it necessary to support the Venetian flotilla with his land troops, hoping thus to get easy possession of those fortresses which cut off Brescia from her supplies. He accordingly laid siege to Bardolino, a fortress standing on the lake, in the hope that should he take it, the other fortresses would surrender. But on this occasion Fortune showed herself hostile, for many of his men sickened; whereupon, abandoning the attempt, he moved to Zevio, a stronghold of the Veronese situated in a productive and healthy district. On learning that the Count had retired, Niccolò, not to lose the opportunity, quitted his camp at Vesagio, came to the lake with a chosen body of men, and, attacking the Venetian flotilla with great impetuosity and fury, captured almost all the galleys. In consequence of which success, but few of the strongholds on the lake were left which did not surrender to Niccolò. Dismayed by this reverse, and fearing that in consequence Brescia might surrender, the Venetians, both by messengers and by letters, exhorted the Count to save it.

Seeing that the chance of succouring it from the lake was gone, and that to approach it by the open plain was impossible by reason of the trenches, ramparts, and other defences contrived by Niccolò (to pass through which in face of a hostile army was to advance

1439. on certain destruction), the Count bethought him that as his march across the mountains had secured the safety of Verona, by a similar movement he might succeed in succouring Brescia. No sooner had he conceived this design than, setting out from Zevio, he marched through the Val d'Acri to the lake of Sant' Andrea, and thence to Torboli and Peneda on the lake of Garda. Hence he proceeded to Tenno, against which he encamped, it being indispensable to get possession of this fortress if he was to pass on to Brescia. Niccolò, perceiving the Count's intention, led his army to Peschiera, whence in conjunction with the Marquis of Mantua, and at the head of a company of picked men, he advanced to meet the Count, and, joining battle, was routed and his followers dispersed. Of these some were captured, while others fled to the main army, others to the fleet. Niccolò himself took refuge in Tenno, but at nightfall, recognising that if he waited where he was till daybreak he must be captured by the enemy, to avoid a certain danger he played a bold game. Of his many followers there remained with him one servant only, a German by birth, of great bodily strength and of proved fidelity. This man Niccolò persuaded to put him in a sack, throw him over his shoulders, and as though he were carrying off his master's clothes bear him to a place of safety. The Count's army lay round Tenno, but in consequence of the day's victory was left without sentinels, and in such disorder that it was easy for the German, dressed as a sutler, to carry his master on his back through the whole camp without hindrance, and bring him safe and sound to his own troops.

§ 24. Had this victory been as wisely used as it was happily won, it would have procured Brescia ampler relief, and the Venetians a more lasting satisfaction. But being turned to little account, the rejoicings in Venice soon ceased, and Brescia remained in the same straits as before. For Niccolò on rejoining his army saw that he must cancel his late defeat by some new success, which might hinder the Venetians from succouring Brescia. He knew the position of the Citadel of Verona, and had learned from prisoners taken during the campaign that the place was carelessly guarded, and might easily be recovered. It seemed therefore that Fortune offered him an opportunity to retrieve his fair fame, and change the joy of his enemies over their recent victory into mourning for a still more recent reverse. 1439.

Verona lies in Lombardy at the base of the mountains separating Italy from Germany, and is built partly on these, partly on the plain. The river Adige, flowing from the Val di Trento, as it enters Italy does not at once spread itself over the plain, but turning to the left along the foot of the hills meets and divides this city, leaving a much larger tract of the town on the side of the plain than on the side of the mountains. On the latter side stand two forts, one named San Pietro, the other San Felice, even stronger from their position than from their construction, and from their elevated site dominating the entire city. On the plain, to the south of the Adige, and attached to the walls of the city, are two other forts, about a mile apart, one of which is known as the Old, the other as the New Citadel. From the inner side of the one runs a wall extending to the other, making as it were a cord to the

1439. arc of the city wall which embraces both. The entire space lying between the two walls is crowded with inhabitants, and is called the *Borgo* (suburb) of San Zeno. These two citadels and this Borgo, Niccolò proposed to seize, in which attempt, both from the known negligence of the ordinary watch, and from his belief that their carelessness had been increased by the recent victory, he thought he might easily succeed. He knew, moreover, that in war no enterprise is so likely to be successful as one which the enemy deems impracticable. Wherefore, after selecting from his troops the fittest men for such an adventure, he, with the Marquis of Mantua, hastened by night to Verona, and without being discovered scaled and captured the New Citadel. From the Citadel his followers descended into the town, broke open the Sant' Antonio Gate, and admitted all his horsemen. Those who guarded the Old Citadel on behalf of the Venetians, hearing an uproar, first when the guards of the New Citadel were being slaughtered, and again when the city gate was broken open, became aware that they had enemies to deal with, and began to sound the alarm and call on the people to defend themselves. The citizens, thus roused from their slumbers, were in great confusion, but the boldest of them seized their arms and hastened to the Piazza de' Rettori. Meanwhile Niccolò's men, after sacking the Borgo of San Zeno, continued their advance, when the citizens seeing that the Duke's troops were in the town, and that there was no way to resist them, implored the Venetian Governors to seek refuge in the forts, and thereby save themselves and the city also; urging that it was better to secure their own lives, and preserve that rich city

for happier fortunes, than bring death upon themselves and destruction on it by an attempt to defend it. Whereupon the Governors and all the other Venetians took refuge in the fort of San Felice. Thereafter, certain of the chief citizens presented themselves before Niccolò and the Marquis of Mantua, beseeching them to take over a wealthy city with honour, rather than a ruined city with infamy; more especially as its inhabitants had not by defending themselves done anything to earn the gratitude of their late masters, or incur the resentment of those who had displaced them. Niccolò and the Marquis comforted them, and, so far as they could in a time of military licence, prevented the city from being sacked; but, not doubting that the Count would soon come to attempt its recovery, they used all efforts to get possession of the forts, and to shut off from the town by trenches and barricades those of them of which they could not get possession, so that it might be difficult for the enemy to effect an entrance. 1439.

§ 25. When word of this exploit reached him, Count Francesco, who was still with his army at Tenno, at first disbelieved it, but when its truth was confirmed by more trustworthy reports he was eager to make up for past remissness by redoubled energy. And although all his chief officers urged him to abandon Verona and Brescia and move to Vicenza, lest by remaining where he was he should be hemmed in by his enemies, he would not consent, but was resolved to run all risks for the recovery of the lost city. And when the Venetian *Provveditori*, and Bernardetto de' Medici, who was with him as Commissary on behalf of the Florentines, showed their misgivings, he turned to

1439. them and pledged his word that, if even one of the fortresses had held out, the recovery of the town was certain. Whereupon, putting his forces in order, he marched with all speed to Verona. When the Count first came in sight, Niccolò believed that he was making, as his officers had counselled him, for Vicenza ; but afterwards observing that the horsemen were turning towards the town and approaching the fort of San Felice, he sought to arrange for defence. For this, however, he was now too late, as the barricades he had begun were not yet completed, nor could his soldiers, who were scattered about in search of plunder and ransoms, be got together in time to arrest the Count's men-at-arms before they reached the fort, through which they descended into the city and retook it, with discredit to Niccolò and loss to his followers. Niccolò and the Marquis of Mantua at first sought refuge in the Citadel, then fled across country to Mantua, where, rallying the remnant of their men, they joined the army investing Brescia. Thus within four days was Verona won and lost by the Duke's soldiers.

After this victory, it being now winter and the cold severe, the Count, who with extreme difficulty had succeeded in sending supplies into Brescia, went into quarters at Verona, whence he gave orders for building galleys during the winter at Torboli, so that in the spring he might be strong enough both by land and water to set Brescia completely free.

1440. § 26. Seeing the campaign at a stay, and his hopes of possessing both Verona and Brescia disappointed, and recognising that the origin of all his mishaps had been the money and the counsels of the Florentines, whom

neither their ill treatment by the Venetians, nor his own fair promises, had been able to detach from their alliance with Venice, the Duke, in order that they might taste more sensibly the fruits of their own sowing, decided to invade Tuscany. To which enterprise he was also incited by the Florentine exiles and by Niccolò Piccinino, the latter moved by his desire to possess himself of the estates of Braccio and drive the Count from the March, the former by their longing to return to their native country. Each of whom urged upon the Duke the arguments best suited to the circumstances, and most favourable to their own ends. Niccolò pointed out how the Duke, while sending him into Tuscany, might yet prosecute the siege of Brescia, since he was master of the lake, had strong and well-stored fortresses on the land, and had in his service other Captains and soldiers whom he could oppose to the Count should the latter attempt any new enterprise. But it was contrary to reason that the Count should make any such attempt until he had first relieved Brescia, and the relief of Brescia was impossible. In this way the Duke might carry war into Tuscany without suspending his efforts in Lombardy. Niccolò also represented that the Florentines, so soon as they saw him in Tuscany, must either recall the Count or be undone, and that in either case the Duke would have the victory. The exiles, on their part, asserted that were Niccolò and his army to approach Florence, it was absolutely certain that the Florentines, disgusted with the imposts and insolence of their rulers, would rise in arms against them. They declared also that the approach to Florence was easy, and engaged, on the strength of the close friendship existing between 1440.

1440. Messer Rinaldo and the Count of Poppi, to secure an open road through the Casentino. Eventually the Duke, who from the first favoured this enterprise, was induced by these arguments to undertake it.

The Venetians, for their part, though the winter was unusually severe, never ceased soliciting the Count to succour Brescia with all the forces at his disposal. This the Count protested he could not do at that season; they must wait till spring, and in the meanwhile put their fleet in order, so as to be able to send succour both by land and water. The Venetians, displeased with this advice, allowed the pay of their soldiers to fall into arrear; consequently their army dwindled.

§ 27. Informed of all these matters, and seeing the war approach themselves while little progress had been made in Lombardy, the Florentines grew alarmed. Nor did their distrust of the forces of the Church cause them less anxiety; not that the Pope was hostile, but because they saw these arms to be less at his command than at that of the Patriarch, their bitter foe.

Giovanni Vitelleschi of Corneto, at first Apostolic Notary, then Bishop of Recanati, afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria, was finally, on being admitted to the Sacred College, designated Cardinal of Florence. Bold and astute, he contrived to make himself much loved by the Pope, by whom he was set over the armies of the Church, and made leader in all the enterprises which the Pope undertook in Tuscany, Romagna, Naples, and Rome. Hence he acquired such ascendency both over the soldiery and over the Pope, that the latter was afraid to give him orders, while the former would obey no one but him. When the report

came that Niccolò intended to pass into Tuscany, the Cardinal was with his troops in Rome, and this redoubled the alarm of the Florentines; for from the time when Messer Rinaldo was expelled, the Cardinal, remembering that the terms agreed to between the parties in Florence on his mediation had not been observed, nay, had been used to Rinaldo's prejudice, leading him to lay aside his arms and so give his enemies opportunity to drive him out, had been the constant enemy of the Republic. It seemed, therefore, to the heads of the Government, that were the Cardinal to come into Tuscany and join Niccolò, it would signify that the time had arrived when Rinaldo's wrongs were to be redressed. These suspicions were strengthened by the circumstance that Niccolò's departure from Lombardy seemed ill-timed, since he was leaving an enterprise almost achieved to engage in one altogether uncertain. This they thought he would not do, unless upon some new understanding or secret intrigue. Of these suspicions they had warned the Pope, who was already conscious of his mistake in vesting another with excessive authority. While the Florentines were still in this perplexity, Fortune showed them a way to secure themselves against the Patriarch. To discover whether any were plotting against the Government, the Republic had everywhere diligent searchers of all who carried letters. Letters were seized at Montepulciano written by the Patriarch to Niccolò Piccinino without the Pope's authority. These were at once forwarded to the Pope by the Magistrates in charge of the war, and though they were written in cipher, and couched in language so involved and ambiguous that no definite meaning could be drawn 1440.

1440. from them, this very obscurity in corresponding with an enemy excited such suspicion in the Pope's mind that he determined to make things safe, and gave the matter in charge to Antonio Rido of Padua, Governor of the Castle of St. Angelo, who prepared to execute his commission as soon as opportunity offered. The Patriarch had settled to proceed to Tuscany. On the day before he was to leave Rome he notified to the Governor to be in waiting next morning on the bridge of the Castle, as there were matters he desired to speak to him about as he passed forth. Antonio, who saw that now was his chance, instructed his men what they were to do, and at the time appointed awaited the Patriarch on the bridge, which, being close to the Castle, could for greater security be raised or lowered as required. When the Patriarch came upon the bridge, Antonio, having first engaged him in conversation, gave a signal to his men to raise it, so that in an instant, from a commander of armies the Patriarch became the prisoner of a Castellan. The soldiers who accompanied him at first cried out, but were quieted on learning that this was the Pope's will. But when the Castellan tried to soothe his captive with courteous words, holding out hopes that all would yet be well, he answered that great personages were not made prisoners merely to let them go, and that those who least deserved imprisonment were the last to be set free. A few days after he died in captivity, when the Pope appointed Lodovico, Patriarch of Aquileia, to command his forces. And whereas heretofore the Pope had always declined to involve himself in the wars between the League and the Duke, he now consented to interpose, and promised to be ready for the

defence of Tuscany with four thousand horsemen and two thousand foot. 1440.

§ 28. Freed from this danger, the Florentines were still disquieted by their fear of Niccolò, and by the confusion caused in Lombardy by dissensions between the Venetians and the Count. To reconcile these disputes, they sent Neri, son of Gino Capponi, and Messer Giuliano Davanzati to Venice, with instructions to arrange for the campaign of the coming year; but with further orders to Neri that, after learning the views of the Venetians, he should go on to the Count and ascertain his, and persuade him to agree to all such matters as were essential for the preservation of the League. The envoys before they reached Ferrara got word that Niccolò Piccinino had crossed the Po with six thousand horsemen; which news made them hasten on their journey. On arriving in Venice they found the Venetian Senate possessed by the one desire that, without heed to the season, Brescia should be succoured at once, since it could not wait for relief till spring, nor until a new fleet could be equipped; and unless it saw other help coming must surrender to the enemy. This would give a complete victory to the Duke, and be the ruin of their entire dominion on the mainland. Whereupon Neri repaired to Verona to hear the Count, and learn what he had to say against this course.

The Count showed him by manifold arguments that to march at that season against Brescia would be useless then, and fatal to any future action. For having regard to the season and the position of the town, Brescia could in no way benefit by such a movement,

1440. the only result whereof would be to disorder and fatigue his troops; moreover, when spring came and the weather allowed of something being done, he would be forced to return with his army to Verona to renew the supplies consumed during the winter, and needed for the ensuing campaign. In this way the entire time during which hostilities could be carried on would be wasted in going and returning. Messer Orsatto Giustiniani and Messer Giovanni Pisani, who had been sent from Venice to discuss these matters, were with the Count at Verona, with whom, after much debate, it was agreed that for the coming year the Venetians should pay the Count eighty thousand ducats, and to the rest of their soldiers forty ducats for each lance, and that the entire army should be led out as soon as possible to attack the Duke, so that the latter, in fear for his own interests, might recall Niccolò to Lombardy. This being settled they returned to Venice. Having so great a sum to pay, the Venetians were extremely slow in furnishing supplies.

§ 29. Meanwhile Niccolò Piccinino, continuing his march, had come into Romagna, and had so wrought on the sons of Pandolfo Malatesta that, forsaking the Venetians, they took sides with the Duke. Their desertion caused great displeasure at Venice, and still greater at Florence, where it had been hoped that through them some resistance might be offered to Niccolò. Wherefore, seeing the Malatesti abandon them, the Florentines were dismayed; and all the more because they feared that Pietro Giampaolo Orsino, their Captain, who was then in the territories of the Malatesti, might be laid hold of, and they left disarmed.

The Count too was troubled by these tidings, fearing 1440.
he might lose the March while Niccolò passed through it into Tuscany. In his anxiety to guard his own possessions, he hastened to Venice, and obtaining audience of the Doge sought to show him that it would be for the advantage of the League that he should proceed to Tuscany, since war had to be made where the army and leader of the enemy were, and not where his fortresses and garrisons lay. For the defeat of an enemy's army secures victory, whereas the capture of his fortresses, while his army is left unbroken, only makes the war many times hotter. And he said that unless Niccolò were stoutly met, the March and Tuscany would be lost; and these lost, that Lombardy was gone. But, the remedy being in his hands, he had no mind to abandon his subjects and friends, and having come a Lord into Lombardy, would not leave it a mere Condottiere. To this the Doge made answer, that if it were the Count's intention not merely to leave Lombardy, but also to withdraw his troops from beyond the Po, it was clear that the whole dominion of the Venetians on the mainland must be lost; consequently they would not put themselves to further expense in defending it; for he were a fool who tried to defend what nothing could save, and less disgrace and less injury would be incurred in losing territories only, than in losing both territories and money. When their ruin was complete, it would be seen how much the security of Tuscany and of Romagna depended on the prestige of Venice. But a very different opinion from the Count's was entertained by the Venetians, for they believed that whosoever was victorious in Lombardy would be victorious every-

1440. where; and that victory would be easy, since the Duke was so weakened by Niccolò's departure that he could be crushed before he had time to recall him or supply his place. And any one who considered things carefully, must see that the Duke had sent Niccolò into Tuscany with no other object than to withdraw the Count from the enterprise on which he was engaged, and shift elsewhere the war that was being waged in Lombardy. Wherefore if the Count went after Niccolò, when there appeared no urgent need for doing so, he would merely be carrying out the Duke's designs and furthering his wishes; whereas if they maintained their army in Lombardy, while making such provision as they could for Tuscany, the Duke would find when too late how fatal a course he had followed, and that he had lost irretrievably in Lombardy, yet gained nothing in Tuscany.

Both sides having thus stated their views, it was agreed they should wait a few days to see what came of Niccolò's accord with the Malatesti; whether the Florentines could count on Pietro Giampaolo; and whether the Pope kept staunch to the League as he had pledged himself to do. After a few days, trustworthy intelligence was received that the Malatesti had consented to the accord with Niccolò more through fear than from any ill design; that Pietro Giampaolo had moved with his troops towards Tuscany; and that the Pope was even more disposed than at first to assist the League. These tidings calmed the Count's anxiety and reconciled him to remaining in Lombardy, while Neri Capponi went back to Florence, taking with him a thousand of the Count's horsemen and five hundred horsemen of the Venetians. It was, however, arranged

that should affairs in Tuscany take a turn necessitating 1440.
the Count's presence there, Neri was to write him word; when he, putting all other considerations aside, should come at once. Neri and his horsemen reached Florence in the month of April, where Pietro Giampaolo also arrived on the same day.

§ 30. Meanwhile Niccolò Piccinino, after settling the affairs of Romagna, was planning his descent on Tuscany. It had been his intention to march by the Val di Montone and the mountains of San Benedetto, but he found these places so well guarded by the valour of Niccolò of Pisa, that he judged any attempt in this direction useless. To guard other passes, the Florentines not anticipating so sudden an attack were ill-provided either with soldiers or leaders. They had therefore sent forward raw levies, under the command of certain of their citizens, among whom the Knight Bartolommeo Orlandini was charged with the defence of Marradi and the pass through the neighbouring mountains. Niccolò Piccinino having satisfied himself that he could not force a way by the pass of San Benedetto, in consequence of the valour of its defender, thought he might succeed in effecting a passage by the defile of Marradi, through the cowardice of him who had been placed to guard it. Marradi is a stronghold standing at the base of the mountains which divide Tuscany from Romagna. On the side towards Romagna and the head of the Val di Lamona, though unwalled, it is nevertheless well defended by the river, by the mountains, and by its inhabitants. For the men are bred to arms, and loyal; the river has worn so deep a channel and has such

1440. lofty banks, that if the little bridge spanning the stream be well guarded, any approach by the valley is impossible; while on the side of the mountains, the cliffs are so steep as to render the position extremely secure. In spite of all this, the cowardice of Messer Bartolommeo infected those under his command, and made the strong place weak. For no sooner did he hear the sound of the approaching enemy, than, abandoning all defence, he fled with his whole garrison, nor halted till he reached Borgo San Lorenzo. Whereupon Niccolò entering the deserted fortress, full of amazement that it had not been held, and of joy at having got possession, descended on the Mugello, where he took several walled villages, and halting his army at Pulicciano, thence raided the country as far as the hills of Fiesole, nay, was bold enough to cross the Arno, and carry havoc and desolation within three miles of Florence.

§ 31. Nevertheless the Florentines were not disheartened, but strove before all things to strengthen the Government, which, indeed, they were nowise inclined to distrust, as well from the good will wherewith the people regarded Cosimo, as because the higher magistracies had been restricted to a few powerful men, who, by their severity when any showed themselves discontented or eager for change, kept the rest steady. They knew, too, of the forces which Neri, under the agreement entered into with Lombardy, was bringing back with him; and they also looked forward to the arrival of the Papal troops. These hopes sustained them till Neri's return. He, however, finding that alarm and disorder were beginning to

spread in the city, resolved to go forth into the open country and check in some measure Niccolò's devastations. He therefore raised from among the common people a company of foot soldiers, with whom, and with all the horsemen he could muster, he sallied forth, and recovered Remole from the enemy. Encamping there, he put a stop to Niccolò's forays, and filled the citizens with hopes of ridding themselves of the foes who surrounded them. Niccolò observing that the Florentines, even when left without soldiers, had made no movement of revolt, and learning that the utmost steadfastness prevailed in the city, thought it would be wasting time to remain longer where he was, and resolved to enter on other enterprises which would oblige the Florentines to send their soldiers after him and give him opportunity to bring them to an engagement, in which, were he victorious, he thought all else would prosper with him. 1440.

Francesco, Count of Poppi, who on the enemy entering the Mugello had at once rebelled against the Florentines, was now with Niccolò's army. The Florentines, who even before this distrusted him, had, in the hopes of securing his fidelity, increased his subsidy, and made him Commissary over all their towns in his neighbourhood. Nevertheless, such influence does the spirit of party exert over men's minds that neither benefits nor fear could cancel his attachment to Messer Rinaldo and the others who had formerly governed the State. Accordingly, when he heard of Niccolò's advent he immediately joined him, and now earnestly besought him to withdraw from the city and pass into the Casentino, pointing out the strength of that district, and how, in perfect safety, he might

1440. thence harass the enemy. Acting on this advice, Niccolò moved to the Casentino, seized on Romena and Bibbiena, and then encamped against Castel San Niccolò. This fortress, situated at the foot of the mountains which divide the Casentino from Val d'Arno, by reason of its elevated site, and from being well garrisoned, was difficult to reduce, though Niccolò kept up a constant attack upon it with mangonels, and like engines of war. The siege had lasted more than twenty days, during which time the Florentines had got their forces once more together, mustering at Fegghine under different Condottieri three thousand horsemen, commanded by Pietro Giampaolo as Captain, and by Neri Capponi and Bernardo de' Medici as Commissaries. To these last there came four messengers from Castel San Niccolò praying for aid. On surveying the position, the Commissaries found that the only route by which succour could be given lay across the mountains that rise from Val d'Arno, but as a movement over these mountains could not be concealed, and as their summits could be reached and occupied by the enemy, who had a shorter distance to go, sooner than by themselves, they were of opinion that such an attempt must fail, and might result in the destruction of their entire army. Wherefore, after commending the loyalty of the garrison, they charged them not to surrender until they saw they could no longer defend themselves. It was only after a siege of thirty-two days that Niccolò got possession of this stronghold, and the loss of so much time for so little gain led in great measure to the failure of his campaign in Tuscany. For had he held his ground with his troops round Florence, those who governed there

could not have drawn money from the citizens with a free hand, and with the enemy at their gates would have had far more difficulty in assembling their soldiers, and in making all other necessary preparations. Many, too, seeing the war likely to last, would have been disposed to make their peace with Niccolò by proposing terms. But the eagerness of the Count of Poppi to be revenged on the townsmen of San Niccolò, who had long been at enmity with him, made him give the advice he gave, which Niccolò to oblige him followed, and which was the ruin of both. For it seldom happens that private grudges are not hurtful to the common cause. 1440.

Following up this victory, Niccolò next took Rassina and Chiusi. Here the Count of Poppi urged him to stay, pointing out that, by spreading his forces between Chiusi, Caprese, and Pieve he would be master of all the hill country, have it in his power to descend at pleasure either on the Casentino, the Val d'Arno, the Val di Chiana, or the Val di Tevere, and be ready to meet any movement of his enemies. But Niccolò, having regard to the rough nature of the country, made answer that '*his horses did not eat stones*,' and proceeded to Borgo San Sepolcro, where he was well received. While there he sounded the minds of the people of Città di Castello, who being friends of the Florentines would not listen to him. Next, desiring to have the Perugians in his interest, he went to Perugia with forty horsemen, where, being himself a citizen of the town, he was lovingly received. In a few days, however, he became distrusted, and though he made many attempts to win over the townsmen and the Pope's Legate, none of them succeeded. Wherefore,

1440. on receiving from the Perugians eight thousand ducats, he went back to his army. He now engaged in a plot for taking Cortona from the Florentines; but the scheme being discovered before the time fixed for its execution, his plans were frustrated. Among the chief citizens of this town was Bartolommeo di Senso. Going of an evening by order of the Governor to visit the guard of one of the city gates, he was stopped by a countryman who was his friend, and warned to go no further if he valued his life. Asking the meaning of the warning, Bartolommeo was told the particulars of the plot contrived by Niccolò. These he forthwith reported to the Governor, who after arresting the ringleaders of the conspiracy, and doubling the guards at the gates, waited till Niccolò should come as he had arranged. Coming by night at the appointed hour, and finding his plot discovered, Niccolò returned to his quarters.

§ 32. While things were being conducted after this fashion in Tuscany with little advantage to the Ducal arms, in Lombardy so far from going smoothly, they were occasioning injury and loss. For, as soon as the season allowed, Count Francesco took the field with the army, and, as the Venetians had by this time refitted their flotilla, his first object was to secure mastery by water and drive the Duke from the lake; judging that were this done all else would be easy. Accordingly, with the Venetian galleys he attacked and defeated those of the Duke, and then captured with his land forces all the strongholds which rendered the Duke obedience. On hearing of these reverses the division of the Ducal army which was investing Brescia on the

land side drew off, and thus after a three years' siege 1440.
Brescia was relieved. Following up these successes the Count now marched in pursuit of the enemy, who had fallen back on Soncino, a fortress on the river Oglio, whence dislodging them, he forced them to retreat to Cremona, where the Duke had his headquarters and was conducting in person the defence of his dominions. But when every day the Count pressed him closer, the Duke, fearing that he was about to lose either all or a great part of his territory, and desiring to correct the fatal blunder which he saw he had made in sending Niccolò into Tuscany, wrote informing him of the straits to which his enterprise had brought him, and exhorting him to leave Tuscany as speedily as he could, and return to Lombardy.

The Florentines meanwhile, after uniting the forces commanded by their Commissaries with those of the Pope, had encamped at Anghiari, a fortress standing at the foot of the mountains which divide Val di Tevere from Val di Chiana, at a distance of four miles from Borgo San Sepolcro. Here the road was level, and the ground well suited for manœuvring cavalry, and for all military movements. But inasmuch as the Government had got word of the Count's successes and of Niccolò's recall, they looked on the war as already decided in their favour, without drawing sword. They therefore wrote to the Commissaries to abstain from fighting, as Niccolò could not remain in Tuscany many days longer. These instructions came to the knowledge of Niccolò, who seeing himself obliged to go, and yet desiring to leave nothing untried, determined to give battle at once, hoping to find the enemy unprepared and thinking of anything rather than of

1440. combat. To which course he was also urged by the Count of Poppi, by Messer Rinaldo, and by the other Florentine exiles, who knew their ruin to be certain were Niccolò to leave them, whereas by coming to a decisive engagement they thought either to gain a victory, or suffer an honourable defeat. Having thus resolved, Niccolò moved his army from where it had been encamped between Città di Castello and Borgo San Sepolcro, and entering the latter town unobserved by the enemy, drew thence two thousand men, who, confiding in his valour and his promises, followed him in their greed for plunder.

§ 33. Marching with his forces towards Anghiari, Niccolò had got within two miles of the Florentines, when Micheletto Attendulo, observing a great cloud of dust, conjectured that this must be raised by the enemy, and called on his men to arm. Extreme confusion followed in the Florentine camp, for besides the ordinary absence of discipline which prevails in the camps of our Italian soldiers, on this occasion they were off their guard, believing their enemy to be at a distance, and more disposed to fly than fight. Every one, therefore, was unarmed, far from his quarters, straying wherever his inclinations led him, whether to avoid the heat, which was intense, or in quest of other solace. So great, however, were the efforts made by the Commissaries and the Captain, that before the enemy came up, all were mounted and arrayed to meet his onset. As Micheletto was the first to descry the enemy, so he was foremost to encounter him in arms, riding with his men down to the bridge which at no great distance from Anghiari carries the road across the

river. Before the enemy's arrival Pietro Giampaolo had caused the ditches on both sides of the road between the bridge and Anghiari to be filled up, so that when Micheletto posted himself in front of the bridge, Simoncino the Condottiere of the Church, and the Legate, drew up on the right side of the road, the Florentine Commissaries with Pietro Giampaolo their Captain on the left, while the infantry were disposed on both sides down to the edge of the stream. Consequently the only way by which the enemy could advance to meet their foes, was the straight one across the bridge; nor had the Florentines to meet their onset save at this point, except in so far as orders had been given to their infantry in case the infantry of the enemy should quit the road so as to flank their own men-at-arms, to assail them with their cross-bows, and so prevent them from attacking the Tuscan cavalry in flank when these crossed the bridge. Those of the enemy who first came forward were resolutely met, and repulsed, by Micheletto; but Astorre Manfredi and Francesco Piccinino, advancing with a body of picked men to their support, charged so furiously that they cleared the bridge, and drove Micheletto back to where the road mounts to the village of Anghiari. Here, however, their course was stayed, and they in their turn were driven back beyond the bridge by the Tuscan infantry attacking them in flank. This struggle lasted for two hours; at one time Niccolò, at another the Florentines getting possession of the bridge. But though on the bridge itself the combat was maintained on equal terms, at both its ends Niccolò fought to great disadvantage, for when his men came over, they found their enemy in great force, and able, from the 1440.

1440. road having been levelled, to move freely about and bring up fresh combatants to relieve those who were exhausted; whereas, when the Florentines forced their way across, Niccolò had no facilities for relieving his tired men, being hampered by the ditches and walls bordering the road. And this happened repeatedly. For again and again Niccolò's men charged over the bridge, but were always driven back by the fresh forces of the enemy. But when the Florentines carried the bridge and got into the road on the other side, the fury of their charge and the difficulties of the ground left Niccolò no time to relieve his exhausted men, and those in front becoming mixed up with those behind, each threw the other into disorder, so that at last his entire army was forced to retreat, and all discipline being at an end, every man fled for refuge to Borgo San Sepolcro, The Florentine soldiers now fell to plundering, and reaped a rich harvest in prisoners, arms, and horses, for of all who were with Niccolò not more than a thousand horsemen escaped. The men of Borgo who had followed him in hopes of pillage, instead of despoiling others, themselves became a spoil, all being taken and held to ransom. The standards and baggage wagons were likewise captured.

This victory was much more advantageous for Tuscany than disastrous for the Duke, for had the Florentines lost the battle Tuscany would have been his; whereas the Duke losing it lost nothing beyond the arms and horses of his soldiers, which could be replaced at no great cost. Indeed there never was a time when war waged in an enemy's country was less dangerous for him who waged it than the period of

which I speak. And in this great rout and protracted engagement, lasting from four in the afternoon to eight in the evening, one man only was slain, and even he perished not from wounds, or any blow dealt him in combat, but from being trampled on after falling from his horse. With such safety did men then fight; for all being mounted on horseback, and sheathed in mail, and assured against death should they surrender, there was no reason why they should die, their armour protecting them while they fought, and surrender saving them when they could fight no longer. 1440.

§ 34. This battle, in respect of what happened both while it was being fought and after, is a memorable instance of the shortcomings of these wars. When the enemy was routed, and Niccolò had retreated to Borgo, the Commissaries desired to follow and besiege him there, and so make their victory complete. But not one of their men, whether Condottiere or common soldier, would obey. For they said they must deposit their booty in a place of safety, and see to their wounds. And what is even more noteworthy, at noon of the following day, without leave or licence from Commissary or Captain, they all set off for Arezzo, nor returned to Anghiari till they had deposited their spoil. Such disregard of every sound rule of military discipline would have made it possible for the merest wreck of a well-trained army, to deprive them easily and deservedly of the victory they had undeservedly won. Nay more, although the Commissaries desired to keep as prisoners the men-at-arms who had been captured, so as to deprive the enemy of opportunity to renew their strength, the soldiery, contrary to command, released them.

1440. And indeed it seems marvellous that in an army so constituted there should be valour enough to win a victory, and such cowardice in their enemies as to let themselves be vanquished by troops so ill-disciplined.

During the time wasted by the Florentine soldiers in going to and returning from Arezzo, Niccolò had opportunity given him to escape with his followers from Borgo, and make his way to Romagna. He was accompanied in his flight by the Florentine rebels, who seeing all hope gone of a return to Florence, now dispersed as each thought fit to various lands in Italy and elsewhere. Among others, Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi, chose Ancona as his place of banishment, but to secure for himself, since he had lost his native home, a home in heaven, he went on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Christ. On his return while he sat at table, celebrating the marriage of one of his daughters, he suddenly died. Wherein Fate dealt kindly with him, causing him to die on the least unhappy of all his days of exile. He was indeed a man honoured in all changes of fortune, and would have been honoured still more had he been born in a united city; for in a divided city many of those qualities were hurtful to him, which in a united city would have increased his renown.

After their soldiers had returned from Arezzo, and after Niccolò had escaped, the Commissaries appeared before Borgo. The Borghesi desired to give themselves up to the Florentines, who would not accept their surrender. While the matter was being discussed, the Pope's Legate began to suspect that the Commissaries were unwilling to take over the town for the Church; and as they fell to abusing one another, trouble might have followed between the Florentine

and Papal troops had negotiations been prolonged; 1440.
but the matter being concluded as the Legate desired, all was peacefully settled.

§ 35. While the affairs of Borgo were being dealt with, it was rumoured that Niccolò Piccinino had gone towards Rome, while other advices said towards the March. In consequence it was thought advisable that the Legate and the troops of Count Francesco should proceed to Perugia, whence they might lend aid either to the March or to Rome, to whichsoever of these places Niccolò had gone, and that Bernardetto de' Medici should accompany them, while Neri with the Florentine forces undertook the conquest of the Casentino.

This being decided, Neri laid siege to Rassina and took it, and hastening onward took also Bibbiena, Pratovecchio, and Romena. He then laid siege to Poppi, assailing it from two sides, from the plain of Certomondo, and from over the hill which stretches to Fronzoli. The Count, seeing himself forsaken by God and man, had shut himself up in Poppi, not as hoping for any succour, but that he might make his surrender on conditions as little disadvantageous as possible. Neri investing him closely, the Count sued for terms, and was offered such as in the circumstances he could reasonably expect, namely, to be allowed to depart with his wife, his children, and such of his possessions as he could carry with him, while his town and territories were to be ceded to the Florentines. While these terms were being discussed the Count came down to the bridge over the Arno, which flows past the foot of the fortress, and in grief and sorrow said to Neri:—
'Had I rightly measured my fortune and your power,

1440. I should now be coming as a friend to rejoice with you over your victory, not as an enemy to supplicate mitigation of my ruin. The present turn of events, as it is glorious and joyful for you, for me is deplorable and wretched. I had horses, arms, subjects, power, and riches. What wonder that I relinquish them unwillingly? But since it is your desire and is in your power to dispose of all Tuscany, we others must needs obey. But for my mistake I should not have learned the limits of my fortune, nor could the extent of your generosity be shown; for by sparing me you would give the world an eternal example of your clemency. Let your compassion, therefore, surpass my crime, and leave at least this one house to the descendants of those from whom your fathers received numberless favours.' To whom Neri answered, that his having hoped too much from those who could do little, had made him so sin against the Republic of Florence that, the present state of affairs considered, he must give up everything, and as an enemy of the Florentines cede to them those estates he would not hold as their friend. He had set an example that could not be countenanced, since in any reverse of Fortune it might prove hurtful to their Republic. It was not him, but his estates that they feared; could he be made a Prince in Germany, Florence would be well content, and for the love she bore those ancestors of whom he had spoken, would do what she could to help him. To this the Count answered in great wrath, that he would wish to see the Florentines in a place much further off. Whereupon discontinuing further friendly discussion, the Count surrendered the town and all his rights to the Florentines; and with his wife, children, and chattels,

went forth lamenting with tears the loss of a State held by his ancestors for four hundred years. 1440.

When all these successes came to be known in Florence, they were received by the chief rulers and by the citizens with marvellous delight. On finding there was no truth in the reports that Niccolò had gone either to the March or to Rome, Bernardetto de' Medici came back with his troops to join Neri; and both returning together to Florence, all highest honours that by the laws of the city could be awarded to victorious citizens were conferred on them, and they were received in triumph by the Signory, the Captains of the Party, in a word by the whole city.

BOOK VI

It has always been, and it is reasonable that it should be, the aim of those who enter upon a war, to enrich themselves and impoverish their enemies; nor is victory sought or conquest desired with any other object than to make ourselves powerful and to weaken our adversaries. Whence it follows that whenever victory impoverishes, or conquest weakens you, you must either have gone beyond or fallen short of the end on account of which wars are made. The Prince (and the same holds good of Republics), who crushes the armies of his enemy and takes for his own their spoils and ransoms, is enriched by his victories and wars. He, on the other hand, is impoverished by his victories who, though he vanquishes his enemies, yet cannot wholly crush them, and who must cede all spoils and ransoms to his soldiers as belonging to them and not to him. Such a Potentate is unhappy in defeat, but far more unhappy in victory, suffering in the former case the ills inflicted by foes, in the latter those inflicted by friends, which, as less looked for, are the harder to bear, especially when he finds himself constrained to afflict his subjects with new imposts and burdens. For if he be touched at all by feelings of humanity, he can never greatly rejoice over a victory that saddens all his subjects. The well-ordered States of antiquity on obtaining victories were wont to fill their treasuries with gold

and silver, to remit taxes, distribute gifts among the people, and amuse them with games and shows. But the wars of the times whereof I am now writing, first drained the treasury, then impoverished the people, but never made sure work with enemies; all which resulted from the unsound system on which these wars were conducted. For when vanquished foemen were despoiled, but neither kept as captives nor put to death, a renewal of their attacks was only deferred until they were re-equipped with horses and arms by their employer. Moreover, as both spoils and ransoms belonged to the soldiery, the victorious Prince could not use them for the renewed hiring of troops, but had to wring the money from the vitals of his subjects; so that all the gain the people drew from victory was that it made the Prince more exacting in his demands, and less scrupulous how he enforced them. And to such lengths did these mercenaries, whether defeated or victorious, carry their pretensions, that unless new supplies of money were forthcoming, their employers had no hold over them. For the vanquished Prince had to equip them anew, the victorious, to reward them; and as a beaten army without being re-equipped could not, so a victorious army, without being rewarded, would not fight. Hence it came that while the victor profited little from his victory, the vanquished suffered little from his defeat, the latter having time given him to repair his strength, while the former was always too late to follow up his success.

§ 2. This faulty and perverse system of warfare enabled Niccolò Piccinino whenever he suffered any mishap, to be again on horseback before it was known

in Italy that he was down, and to carry on war against his enemies with more vigour than before; enabled him after his rout at Tenno to surprise Verona; after he had been stripped of his men-at-arms at Verona, to come with a strong army into Tuscany; and after his defeat at Anghiari, to reach Romagna stronger in the field than ever, so that he could hold out hopes to the Duke of being able to defend Lombardy, which, owing to his absence, the Duke thought was almost lost. For while Niccolò Piccinino was spreading tumult through
1440. Tuscany, the Duke had been reduced to such straits that he feared for his dominions; and thinking ruin might overtake him before Niccolò, whom he had recalled, could come to his assistance, he, in order to stay the onset of Count Francesco and ward off by address the mischief he could not resist by arms, resorted to methods that on like occasions had often stood him in stead, and sent Niccolò d'Este, Lord of Ferrara, to Peschiera, where the Count then was, to urge him to make peace, and show him that war was not for his interest. For were the Duke so weakened that he could not maintain his state and dignity, the Count would be the first to suffer, since he would no longer be held in estimation by the Venetians and the Florentines. As a guarantee that the Duke desired peace, the envoy engaged that the marriage of the Count with the Lady Bianca should be celebrated forthwith, and that her father would send the damsel to Ferrara, where, on peace being declared, she would be given into Count Francesco's hands. The Count answered that if the Duke really wished for peace, he could have it easily, since it was what both the Florentines and the Venetians desired. But in truth it was

hard to believe him, since it was well known that he 1440.
had never made peace save under a necessity, and whenever that necessity ceased his desire for war revived. Nor indeed could he trust the Duke's promise in the matter of the marriage, in respect of which he had so often been deceived; nevertheless, were peace concluded, he would do as regarded that alliance whatsoever his friends advised him.

§ 3. In consequence of these secret negotiations the Venetians, who even without reasonable grounds distrust their mercenaries, were reasonably filled with the gravest suspicions. These the Count desiring to remove, prosecuted the war unremittingly. His mind, however, was so disturbed by ambition, and the confidence of the Venetians so chilled by distrust, that little was achieved during the remainder of the summer. Wherefore, when Niccolò Piccinino returned to Lombardy, winter being now begun, all the combatants betook themselves to their winter quarters; the Count to Verona, the Duke to Cremona, the Florentine men-at-arms to Tuscany, and those of the Pope to Romagna. These last after their victory at Anghiari had attacked Forlì and Bologna, hoping to wrest them from the hands of Francesco Piccinino who governed them in his father's name. But their attempts met with no success, both towns being gallantly defended by Francesco. The approach, however, of the Papal troops threw the citizens of Ravenna into such alarm lest they should again be brought under the rule of the Church, that with the consent of their Lord, Ostasio 1441.
di Polenta, they gave themselves over to the Venetians, who, in return for this submission and to prevent

1441. Ostasio from ever afterwards recovering by force what with little prudence he had surrendered, sent him and his son to die in Candia. In the course of these enterprises the Pope, who notwithstanding the victory of Anghiari, was ill-provided with money, sold the fortress of Borgo San Sepolcro to the Florentines for twenty-five thousand ducats.

Such being the state of affairs, and every one thinking himself safe from attack during the winter, no further attention was given to the conclusion of peace. More particularly the Duke, being reassured by the return of Niccolò Piccinino as well as by the lateness of the season, had broken off all negotiations for an accord with the Count, and was making every effort to remount Niccolò's followers, and provide whatever else might be needed in the impending campaign. The Count, having notice of this, repaired to Venice to consider with the Senate how things were to be conducted in the coming year. Niccolò, on the other hand, finding himself again equipped, and seeing his enemy off his guard, without awaiting the return of spring, crossed the Adda in mid-winter, and, entering the Brescian territory, took possession of the whole country with the exception of Adula and Acri, capturing and despoiling more than two thousand of the Count's horsemen who were unprepared for this attack. But what most troubled the Count and alarmed the Venetians was that Ciarpellone, one of the Count's foremost captains, went over to the enemy. Informed of this, the Count immediately quitted Venice, but learned on reaching Brescia that Niccolò, after doing all the mischief he could, had gone back to his winter quarters. Finding the war quenched, the Count had no mind to rekindle

it, but determined to use the opportunity which the season and the enemy allowed him, to reorganise his forces, so as to be ready when the time came to pay off old scores. Accordingly he made the Venetians recall the troops who were aiding the Florentines in Tuscany, and take Micheletto Attendulo as their Condottiere in the place of Gattamelata who was now dead. 1441.

§ 4. On the return of spring Niccolò Piccinino was first in the field and laid siege to Cignano, a fortress situated about twelve miles from Brescia. Count Francesco came to succour it, and between these two captains the campaign was carried on in accordance with their wonted tactics. Fearing for Bergamo, the Count laid siege to Martinengo, a stronghold so placed that were it taken, Bergamo, which was seriously threatened by Niccolò, could easily be relieved. Niccolò, however, foreseeing that Martinengo was the one point at which he might be baffled by his enemy, had strengthened it with every kind of defence, so that the Count had to employ his whole army in besieging it. Niccolò thereupon posted his forces so as to cut off his enemy's supplies, and so fortified himself with trenches and ramparts that he could not be attacked without manifest risk; and the whole affair was so skilfully contrived that the besiegers were in greater danger than the besieged. The Count being thus prevented by want of supplies from continuing the siege, and being unable without risk to withdraw from it, it seemed certain that victory lay with the Duke, and that complete defeat awaited the Count and the Venetians. But Fortune, never at a loss for means to

1441. help her friends or discomfit her foes, inflated Niccolò to such a pitch of ambition and insolence with hopes of this victory, that, regardless of what was due to his master, or creditable for himself, he wrote to the Duke that, having long fought under his standard without gaining as much land as would serve him for a grave, he wished to know what reward he was to have for his pains; for it rested with him to make the Duke Lord of Lombardy, and put all his enemies under his feet. And since it seemed to him that an assured victory merited an assured reward, he desired that the city of Piacenza should be conceded to him, wherein, worn out by long service, he might sometimes find repose. In conclusion he was shameless enough to threaten the Duke that he would abandon the enterprise unless his demand was complied with. The arrogant and offensive terms in which this demand was couched moved the Duke to such wrath and resentment, that sooner than consent to it he determined to close the campaign. Thus, he whom so many dangers and so many menaces from his enemies could not turn from his purpose, was turned by the insolent behaviour of his friends. The Duke, therefore, decided to come to terms with the Count, and sent Antonio Guidobuono of Tortona to renew the offer of his daughter in marriage, and make proposals of peace, which were eagerly welcomed by the Count and by all the parties to the League.

After the conditions of peace had been secretly arranged, the Duke sent orders to Niccolò Piccinino to enter into a truce with the Count for a year, declaring himself to be so exhausted by the cost of the war that he could not forgo an assured peace on the

chance of a doubtful success. Niccolò, not knowing 1441.
the reasons which led the Duke to relinquish a glorious victory, and never imagining that to escape rewarding his friends he would be thus ready to spare his enemies, was astounded by the orders given him. He therefore did what he could to combat his master's resolve, until, to silence him, the Duke had to threaten that if he opposed him further he should be left a prey to his own followers and to his enemies. Whereupon, with no less reluctance than one might feel who is forced to quit friends and country, Niccolò obeyed, bewailing his hard lot, and protesting that at one moment Fortune, at another the Duke, had robbed him of a victory. A truce being concluded, the Count's marriage with Madonna Bianca was celebrated, the city of Cremona being handed over to him by way of dower. This ceremony ended, peace was signed in November of the year 1441 by Francesco Barbarico and Pagolo Trono on behalf of the Venetians, and by Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli on behalf of the Florentines. By this treaty the Venetians gained Peschiera, Asola, and Lonato, fortresses which before had belonged to the Marquis of Mantua.

§ 5. The war in Lombardy was thus brought to a stay; but in the kingdom of Naples hostilities still continued, which, not admitting of adjustment, were the occasion of renewed warfare in Lombardy. While the war in Lombardy was being waged, King René had been stripped of his entire Kingdom, excepting only the city of Naples, by Alfonso of Aragon, who, counting victory as now certain, resolved while besieging Naples to despoil Count Francesco of Benevento and his other

1441. estates lying in that neighbourhood. This he thought he could accomplish easily and without danger to himself, the Count being then occupied with the wars in Lombardy. The enterprise succeeded, and Alfonso with little effort got possession of all these territories. But when news came of the peace concluded in Lombardy, Alfonso began to fear that, to recover his estates, the Count might come to the assistance of King René. For the same reasons King René began to build hopes on the Count, and sent messengers inviting him to come to aid a friend and revenge himself on an enemy. Alfonso, on the other hand, besought Duke Filippo, for the sake of old friendship, to keep the Count employed, that being busied with more important matters he might be forced to leave his private claims in abeyance. Filippo complied with this request, caring little that thereby he contravened the treaty he had just concluded much to his disadvantage. He accordingly intimated to Pope Eugenius that now was his time to recover those estates of the Church whereof the Count had possessed himself; and to effect this offered him the services (to be paid for while the war lasted by the Duke himself) of Niccolò Piccinino who, on the conclusion of peace, had quartered himself with his troops in Romagna. From the hatred he bore the Count, as well as from his desire to recover what was his own, Pope Eugenius eagerly accepted this offer; for although on a former occasion he had been duped by Niccolò with like hopes, he now believed, the Duke having intervened, that there could be no suspicion of fraud. Wherefore, joining his forces with those of Niccolò, he invaded the March. Though taken aback by this sudden on-

set, Count Francesco, gathering together his men-at-arms, moved to meet his enemies.

About this time King Alfonso got possession of 1442.
Naples, so that the whole Kingdom with the exception of Castelnuovo was now in his hands. René, therefore, leaving a strong garrison in Castelnuovo, departed and came to Florence where he was received with the highest honours; but finding after a few days' stay that he could not prolong the war he passed on to Marseilles. Meanwhile Alfonso had taken Castelnuovo, and Count Francesco, seeing himself to be weaker than the Pope and Niccolò in the March, had applied to the Venetians and Florentines to aid him with men and money, declaring that if they did not take heed now, while life was still left him, to check the Pope and the King, they would soon have to think of their own safety; since these powers would unite with Duke Filippo and divide Italy among them. The Florentines and Venetians for a time remained in suspense, partly because they could not make up their minds whether it was for their interest to incur the enmity of the King and Pope, and partly because at this time they were occupied with the affairs of Bologna. For Annibale Bentivoglio after driving Francesco 1443.
Piccinino from that city had, in order to defend himself against the Duke who favoured Piccinino, sought assistance from the Venetians and the Florentines which they had not refused; so that busied with the affairs of Annibale they could not resolve to help the Count. But when, on the defeat of Francesco Piccinino by Annibale, matters in Bologna seemed to be settled, the Florentines decided to give the Count assistance. But before doing so, in order to make

1443. sure of the Duke, they proposed to him a renewal of their League. To this he was nowise averse; for although he had consented to war being made against Count Francesco while King René was still in arms, when he saw René beaten and utterly stripped of his Kingdom, he had no desire that the Count should be despoiled of his estates. Wherefore he not only consented to assistance being given him, but also wrote to Alfonso to be content to return to the Kingdom, and desist from further war against the Count. And though this advice was most unpalatable to Alfonso, nevertheless, having regard to the obligations he was under to the Duke, he decided to comply with his wishes, and accordingly withdrew with his forces south of the Tronto.

1441. § 6. While affairs in Romagna followed this course, the Florentines were not at peace among themselves. Among the most esteemed of those citizens who took part in the Government of Florence was Neri, son of Gino Capponi, of whose influence more than of any other's Cosimo de' Medici was jealous; for to the great name he bore in the city, was joined his popularity with the soldiery, whose good-will he had won by his worth and valour on many occasions when in command of the Florentine armies. Moreover the memory of victories recognised as due to him and to Gino his father, the latter having reduced Pisa while he himself had defeated Niccolò Piccinino at Anghiari, made him loved by many, and feared by those who desired no partner in the Government. Among the many leaders of the Florentine army was Baldaccio d'Anghiari, a man of excellent skill in war, and in

those days unsurpassed in Italy for courage or prowess, so that by the foot-soldiers, with whom he always served, he was so well thought of that all were ready to follow him and do his bidding in any enterprise he undertook. Baldaccio was the close friend of Neri, whom he loved for those qualities to which he had constantly been witness. This intimacy roused the gravest suspicions in the other citizens, who, thinking it dangerous to dismiss and still more dangerous to retain Baldaccio, resolved to murder him; a design which Fortune in this way promoted. Messer Bartolommeo Orlandini, who was now Gonfalonier of Justice, had been sent to guard Marradi when Niccolò Piccinino, as I have already related, came into Tuscany, and had basely fled, abandoning a position which by its nature almost defended itself. His cowardice disgusted Baldaccio, who both spoke and wrote of it in bitter terms. Enraged at being thus discredited, Messer Bartolommeo burned to revenge himself, thinking he could wipe out his own shame by the death of his accuser. 1441.

§ 7. This desire of Messer Bartolommeo was well known to the other citizens, who easily persuaded him that it behoved him to make away with Baldaccio, and thus at one stroke avenge the insults put upon himself, and rid the State of a man whom it was dangerous to retain and hazardous to dismiss. Whereupon, having made up his mind to slay Baldaccio, Messer Bartolommeo concealed a band of armed ruffians in his chamber, and on Baldaccio coming, as he did daily, into the Piazza to speak with the Magistrates about his engagement, the Gonfalonier sent for him, and he

1444. without misgivings obeyed the summons. The Gonfalonier came forward to meet him and walked with him to and fro along the passage leading to the chambers of the Signors, talking of his engagement. But presently, when he thought the suitable moment had come, being then close to the chamber in which he had posted his armed men, he signalled to them, and they, rushing out and falling upon Baldaccio, who was unarmed and alone, slew him. They then from a window of the Palace facing the Custom House threw the body to the ground, whence carrying it to the Piazza they cut off the head, which for a whole day they showed as a sight to the people. Baldaccio's only son, born to him a few years before by his wife Annalena, died not long after. Left thus without husband or child, Annalena would not again marry, but making her house into a convent, there immured herself with many noble ladies who joined her, and there lived and died a saint. By which convent, founded by her and bearing her name, her memory lives now and will live always.

This outrage damaged to some extent the prestige of Neri, and deprived him of influence and friends. Nor was this enough for the citizens who were in power.

1444. For ten years having now passed since their Government began, and the authority of their *Balía* being at an end, and many persons taking upon them to speak and act with undue freedom, the heads of the State were of opinion that to retain their supremacy they must strengthen it by granting further privileges to friends, and by renewed severities against enemies. Accordingly in the year 1444 they got the Councils to create a new *Balía* which reconstituted the public

offices, gave authority to a few to appoint the Signory 1444.
and renewed the Chancery of the *Riformagioni*, but removed Filippo Pieruzzi from the post, replacing him by one who would adapt himself to the views of those in power. The *Balìa* also prolonged the term of exile of those then in banishment, imprisoned Giovanni, son of Simone Vespucci, deprived of their posts the *Accoppiatori*, who had been appointed by the (former) hostile Government, and with them the sons of Piero Baroncelli, all the Serragli, Bartolommeo Fortini, Messer Francesco Castellari, and many besides. By which measures, they re-established their credit and authority, and lessened the pride of their adversaries, and of all whom they distrusted.

§ 8. Thus renewed and strengthened, the Government now turned its attention to affairs abroad. Niccolò Piccinino, as I have related, had been deserted by King Alfonso, while the Count Francesco, from the help he received from the Florentines, had become strong. The latter accordingly attacked Niccolò near Fermo, and routed him so thoroughly that, after losing nearly all his followers, he fled with the few that remained to Montecchio. Here Niccolò fortified himself and showed so brave a front that very soon his men came back to him in such numbers as made it easy for him to defend himself against the Count, especially as it was now winter, when the Captains of those days were obliged to send their men into quarters. During the whole winter season Niccolò, with the assistance of the Pope and King Alfonso, busied himself in recruiting his troops. Consequently when in the spring both captains took the field,

1444. Niccolò was so much the stronger, that had not his designs been foiled, he must have given the Count a severe defeat. But at this juncture Duke Filippo sent to request his immediate presence, as he desired to confer with him in person on matters of serious moment. In his anxiety to know what the Duke had to say, Niccolò for a doubtful advantage sacrificed a certain victory, and leaving his son Francesco in command of his army, repaired to Milan. Hearing he was gone, the Count, not to lose the opportunity of fighting in his absence, gave battle near the fortress of Monte Loro, defeated Niccolò's troops, and took his son Francesco prisoner. When Niccolò reached Milan and found he had been beguiled by Filippo, and heard of the defeat and capture of his son, he died of grief and vexation. He died in the year of our Lord 1445, at the age of sixty-four. He was a valiant rather than a successful soldier, and his sons Jacopo and Francesco, who survived him, with less ability had even worse fortune than their father; so that the lustre of the Bracceschi arms was well-nigh quenched, while, favoured by fortune, the arms of the Sforzeschi shone always brighter. When he learned that Niccolò was dead and his army routed, the Pope, who had little hope of aid from Aragon, sought to make peace with the Count, which he effected through the mediation of the Florentines. Of the towns of the March, Osimo, Fabriano, and Recanati were by the terms of this treaty awarded to the Pope; all the rest continued under the dominion of the Count.

§ 9. Peace being restored in the March, all Italy would have been at rest had it not been disturbed by

the people of Bologna. There were in this city two 1445.
most powerful houses, the Canneschi and the Bentivogli. Of the latter Annibale was head, of the former Battista. To be on a better footing with one another, the families had intermarried; but when men are stirred by the same ambition it is easier to bring about alliances than friendships. After the expulsion of Francesco Piccinino, Bologna had through the mediation of Annibale Bentivoglio entered into a league with the Florentines and the Venetians. Battista, knowing how greatly the Duke desired to have Bologna on his side, conspired with him to murder Annibale and bring the town under the Ducal standard. The plan for effecting this being agreed upon, Battista and his followers, on the 24th June 1445, attacked and slew Annibale, and afterwards paraded the streets, shouting the Duke's name. The Venetian and Florentine Commissaries were at this time in Bologna. When the tumult broke out they retired to their lodgings; but soon perceiving that the people were not favourable to the murderers, nay, were gathering under arms in great numbers in the public square and bewailing Annibale's death, they took courage, and joining the crowd with such of their soldiers as they could get together, attacked and speedily routed the followers of the Canneschi, slaying some, and driving the rest from the city. Battista, having no time to escape by flight, hid himself in a cellar of his house, made for storing grain; but his enemies, after searching for him in vain for a whole day, knowing that he had not left the town, so intimidated his household by their threats that a servant lad betrayed the place of concealment, whence, being dragged forth, still clad in his armour, he was put to death;

1445. his dead body was then trailed through the streets, and finally burnt. Thus the Duke's authority led Battista to engage in this attempt, but failed to give him the support needed for success.

§ 10. This tumult being ended by the death of Battista and the flight of the Canneschi, the people of Bologna were left in much perplexity, since there remained no one of the house of the Bentivogli fit to govern, Annibale being survived by one son only, a child of six years of age, named Giovanni. Consequently it was feared that disputes might arise among the friends of the Bentivogli, leading to the return of the Canneschi, and the ruin of the city and of the party. While they were thus at a loss, Francesco, who had been Count of Poppi, happening to be in Bologna, informed certain of the chief citizens that if they desired to be governed by one who was of the blood of Annibale, he could tell them where to find him, since he knew that Ercole, the cousin of Annibale, when at Poppi about twenty years before, had intercourse with a damsel of the country, and by her had a son named Santi, whom he had often acknowledged as his own; nor indeed could well disclaim him, since every one who knew Ercole and saw the youth, was struck with the marvellous likeness. The citizens, believing what was told them, lost no time in sending envoys to Florence to find this lad, and obtain the consent of Cosimo and Neri to their carrying him away with them. The reputed father of Santi was then dead, and in consequence the youth was living under the guardianship of an uncle named Antonio da Cascese. Antonio, who was rich and childless, was a

friend of Neri Capponi, who, when the proposal was laid before him, was of opinion that it was not to be either accepted or rejected hastily, but recommended that Santi should speak with the Bolognese envoys in the presence of Cosimo. A meeting accordingly took place, and so strongly did party prepossessions influence the minds of the envoys, that they treated Santi not merely with respect but with the profoundest deference. At this meeting nothing was settled; but after it was over Cosimo called Santi aside and said to him: 'In a case like this no one can pretend to counsel you, and you must follow the course to which your disposition inclines you. If you are the son of Ercole Bentivoglio you will take upon you a part worthy of your house and of your father; but if you are the son of Agnolo da Cascese you will abide in Florence and pass your life ignobly as a wool-stapler.' These words touched the youth to the quick, so that though at first he had been disposed to decline the career opened to him, he now answered that he would do whatever Neri and Cosimo thought best. Whereupon an agreement being come to with the Bolognese envoys, Santi was supplied with raiment, horses, and attendants suitable to a person of high station; and presently, followed by a numerous retinue, was conducted to Bologna, where he was entrusted with the guardianship of Annibale's son and with the government of the city. Both of which offices he discharged so prudently, that whereas all his predecessors came to a violent end, he lived a life of peace, and was greatly honoured on his death. 1445.

§ 11. After the death of Niccolò Piccinino, and after

1445. peace had been concluded in the March, Duke Filippo desired to have a captain to command his forces, and with this object entered into secret negotiations with Ciarpellone, one of Count Francesco's foremost officers. A bargain between them being struck, Ciarpellone sought leave from the Count to proceed to Milan that he might enter on possession of certain villages given him by Filippo in the wars then ended. The Count, suspecting what was going on, to prevent Ciarpellone being used by the Duke as a tool against himself, had him arrested and afterwards put to death, alleging that he had found him out defrauding him. Whereupon Filippo was mightily displeased and angered, to the great content of the Florentines and Venetians, who were much afraid lest the Count's arms and the Duke's power should be united too closely. Nevertheless Filippo's wrath gave occasion for the renewal of war in the March. Gismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, as son-in-law to Count Francesco, had hoped to receive from him the Lordship of Pesaro; but the Count, after taking possession, made it over to his own brother Alessandro. This was much resented by Gismondo, whose displeasure was further increased when his old enemy Federigo of Montefeltro obtained through the Count's favour the Lordship of Urbino. In consequence Gismondo sided with the Duke, and urged the Pope and the King of Naples to make war on the Count. That Gismondo might taste the first fruits of the war he desired, the Count determined to be beforehand with him, and straightway attacked him. Whereupon Romagna and the March were at once in a blaze, for Duke Filippo, the King of Naples, and the Pope sent thither large forces to the support of Gismondo,

while the Florentines and the Venetians furnished the Count, if not with men, with money. Nor was war in Romagna enough for Filippo, whose design it was to take away Cremona and Pontremoli from the Count. Pontremoli, however, was defended by the Florentines, and Cremona by the Venetians. War was thus renewed in Lombardy also, where, after much skirmishing in the country round Cremona, Francesco Piccinino, the Duke's Captain, was routed at Casale by the Venetian troops under Micheletto. This victory encouraged the Venetians to hope they might yet strip the Duke of his dominions. They therefore sent one of their Commissaries to Cremona, and invading the Ghiara d'Adda, overran the whole of that district except Crema; and afterwards, crossing the Adda, ravaged the country as far as Milan. Whereupon the Duke sent envoys to King Alfonso, imploring aid, and representing how seriously the realm of Naples would be endangered should Lombardy fall into the hands of the Venetians. Alfonso promised to send troops to his assistance, though, without leave from the Count, it would be difficult for them to pass. 1446.

§ 12. Filippo thereupon implored Count Francesco not to abandon his father-in-law, now grown old and blind. The Count was still highly offended with the Duke for having stirred up this war against him; on the other hand, he disliked the growing power of the Venetians. Besides, at this time his money was falling short, the League providing him with but a slender stipend. For the Florentines were no longer oppressed by that fear of the Duke which made them value the Count, and the Venetians, thinking that the State of

1446. Lombardy could be taken from them only by him, were eager for his ruin. While Filippo was seeking to draw him into his service by offering him the command of all his forces if he would abandon the Venetians, and restore the March to the Pope, the Venetians likewise sent envoys promising that, if he would prosecute the war in the March, and prevent the auxiliaries sent by Alfonso from reaching Lombardy, they would give him Milan, should they take it, and make him perpetual Captain-General of their army. The promises, therefore, of the Venetians were great, the service they had already rendered him in taking this war upon themselves to secure him Cremona, even greater; while, on the other hand, the wrongs done by the Duke were fresh, his promises meagre and untrustworthy. Yet the Count hesitated what course to follow, influenced in one direction by his duty to the League, his plighted faith, the benefits he had recently received, and the assurances of future advantages, in another by the entreaties of his father-in-law; but above all, moved by the suspicion that venom lay hid under the splendid proffers of the Venetians, and by the belief that were they successful he would be at their mercy, a position into which no prudent prince will ever let himself be brought save by necessity. The difficulty of deciding between these conflicting motives was solved by the Venetians themselves, who hoping, through a secret understanding with certain persons in Cremona, to get possession of that city, found pretexts for ordering their troops to approach it. The plot, however, being discovered by those who held the city for the Count, the schemes of the Venetians were frustrated, and they not only failed

to obtain Cremona, but lost the Count, who, without further wavering, declared for the Duke.

§ 13. Pope Eugenius was dead, and Nicholas v. 1447. created in his room, and Count Francesco had his whole army at Cotignola in readiness to march into Lombardy, when on the last day of August, 1447, he received tidings of Duke Filippo's death. This news filled him with anxiety, for he knew that his troops, whose pay was in arrear, were in some disorder. He had fears too of the Venetians, who were then in arms, and who, from his having recently abandoned them to side with the Duke, were his enemies. He likewise feared Alfonso who had always been his foe. He had no hopes either from the Florentines or from the Pope, for the former were in league with the Venetians, while he himself was in possession of towns belonging to the Church. Nevertheless he resolved to show fortune a bold front, and govern himself as the course of events should determine; for counsels often reveal themselves in action, which in inactivity might remain hidden. What most encouraged him was the belief that if the Milanese desired to defend themselves against the Venetians, his were the only arms to which they could have recourse. Wherefore taking good heart, he passed into the Bolognese territory, and marching by Modena and Reggio, halted with his forces on the Enza, whence he sent to Milan offering his services.

On the Duke's death some of the Milanese desired to live free, some under a Prince. Again, of those who were for a Prince, there were some who preferred the Count, others Alfonso. Those who were for a free form of government, being more united, prevailed

1447. over the others, and devised a Republic in conformity with their own ideas. From this Government, however, many cities of the Dukedom withheld obedience, thinking they had as much right as Milan to enjoy their freedom. Other cities also which did not aspire to independence would not accept the supremacy of the Milanese. Accordingly Lodi and Piacenza surrendered to the Venetians, while Pavia and Parma declared themselves free. Hearing of these disagreements the Count repaired to Cremona, where it was arranged between his agents and the envoys from Milan that he should be Captain for the Milanese on the same terms as he had recently settled with Duke Filippo, with the further stipulation that Brescia should be his, but if Verona were afterwards acquired he should have it in lieu of Brescia.

§ 14. Pope Nicholas v., immediately on his elevation to the Papacy, and before the Duke's death, had sought to establish peace among the Princes of Italy, and with this object had urged upon the envoys sent by the Florentines to congratulate him on his creation that a diet should be held at Ferrara, where either a prolonged truce or a permanent peace might be arranged. The Papal Legate, and the Ducal, Venetian, and Florentine envoys met there accordingly, but no one appeared on behalf of Alfonso. He, with a strong force of horse and foot soldiers was now at Tivoli, and from there was lending support to the Duke; and it was commonly believed that so soon as these two could induce Count Francesco to take part with them, they would openly attack the Florentines and Venetians, and in the meantime, while waiting till

the Count's troops reached Lombardy, would spin out the negotiations at Ferrara; whither, however, the King sent no representative, declaring that he would ratify whatever was agreed to by the Duke. The matter was discussed for several days, and after much controversy it was resolved that there should either be a permanent peace, or a truce for five years, as the Duke might determine. But when the Ducal envoys returned to Milan to learn his pleasure, they found him dead. Notwithstanding his death, the Milanese desired to carry out the agreement, but to this the Venetians would not consent, being filled with strong hopes of possessing themselves of the entire State of Lombardy, especially when they saw that immediately on the Duke's death Lodi and Piacenza of their own accord submitted themselves to them. For they reckoned that, either by consent or by force, they would soon strip Milan of all her territories, and afterwards so reduce her that she too must surrender before any one could come to her assistance. And of this they were even more convinced when they saw the Florentines involved in war with King Alfonso. 1447.

§ 15. Alfonso was at Tivoli, and though still bent on carrying out the enterprise against Tuscany as arranged between himself and Filippo, for which he thought the war now set in motion in Lombardy would afford him time and opportunity, he desired before moving openly to obtain footing within Florentine territory. Accordingly, through a secret understanding with the garrison of Cennina in upper Val d'Arno, he got possession of that fortress. Taken aback by this

1447. unexpected mishap, and seeing the King advancing to their destruction, the Florentines hired troops, appointed the Council of Ten, and made their customary preparations for war. By this time King Alfonso had brought his army into the territory of Siena, and was using all efforts to induce that city to take his part. Howbeit, the citizens stood true to their alliance with the Florentines, and refused to admit the King into Siena or any other of their towns. They provided him, however, with ample supplies, a compliance excused by their weakness and the strength of the enemy. The King did not now propose, as at first he had intended, to enter Tuscany by the way of Val d'Arno, both because in the meantime he had lost Cennina, and because the Florentines were now to some extent provided with soldiers. He therefore directed his march towards Volterra and seized on many fortresses in that district. Thence he moved into the territory of Pisa, where, with the support of Counts Arrigo and Fazio della Gherardesca, he took several strongholds. He next assailed Campiglia, which, however, he did not succeed in capturing, it being defended not only by the Florentines but also by the advent of winter. Wherefore, leaving garrisons to defend the places he had taken, and to lay waste the country round about, he withdrew with the rest of his army into quarters within the Sienese confines.

Meanwhile the Florentines, favoured by the season, were doing their utmost to strengthen their army, of which Federigo, Lord of Urbino, and Gismondo Malatesta of Rimini were in command, and although there was ill feeling between the two leaders, neverthe-

less through the prudence of the Commissaries Neri Capponi and Bernardetto de' Medici, they were kept on such terms that they took the field though it was still midwinter, and recovered all the towns lost in the Pisan territory, as also Pomerance in the country of Volterra, while the King's soldiers, who hitherto had been raiding the Maremma, were so straitened that they could barely hold the towns given them to guard. On the arrival of spring, the Commissaries with their whole forces to the number of five thousand horse and two thousand foot took up their position near Spedaletto, while the King with an army of fifteen thousand men advanced within three miles of Campiglia. But when it was supposed that he was returning to the siege of that town, he fell suddenly on Piombino, which, from its want of preparation, he thought he could easily carry, and which he considered would be a most useful acquisition for him and a serious loss to the Florentines. For as he could there draw supplies by sea, he would be able to wear out the Florentines by protracted warfare, and keep the whole territory of Pisa in alarm. This assault therefore greatly disquieted the Florentines, who taking counsel what course to follow, were agreed that if they could hold the forest of Campiglia with their army, the King would be forced to retire with defeat or discredit. To this end they fitted out four galleys which they had at Livorno, and in these conveyed three hundred foot-soldiers to Piombino, while they themselves encamped at Le Caldane, where they thought it would be difficult to attack them; for they saw it was dangerous to remain longer in the woods upon the plain. 1448.

1448. § 16. The Florentine army drew its supplies from neighbouring villages; but as these were few and thinly inhabited, the supplies were scant. The army suffered in consequence, more especially from want of wine, which as it was neither grown in the country, nor easily brought from elsewhere, could not be had in sufficiency for all. The King, on the other hand, though closely watched by the Florentines, was abundantly provided with everything except forage, all other necessaries coming to him by sea. Desiring to try whether they too could not relieve the wants of their army by sea, the Florentines loaded their galleys with stores to be conveyed to the camp; but on the voyage their ships were met by seven of the King's galleys, when two of the Florentine vessels were captured and the other two put to flight. This mishap made the Florentine troops despair of obtaining additional supplies; and two hundred or more of the common soldiers, mainly because they could get no wine, deserted to the King's camp, while the rest of the army murmured, declaring they would stay no longer in a parched wilderness, where there was no wine, and no water fit to drink. In consequence, the Commissaries resolved to abandon their camp, and attempt the recovery of certain walled villages which still remained in the King's hands. The King, for his part, though not suffering from any scarcity of provisions, and though he had the advantage in numbers, yet found himself every day growing weaker, owing to the fevers which at this season prevail in the Maremma, and which attacked his soldiers with such virulence that many of them died, and almost all sickened. Negotiations for an accord were therefore

entered upon, the King demanding that fifty thousand florins should be paid him, and the town of Piombino left to him to deal with as he pleased. These proposals being discussed in Florence, there were many who in their eagerness for peace were ready to accept them, declaring they could see no hope of succeeding in a war which cost so much to maintain. But Neri Capponi, coming to Florence, argued so strongly against the King's conditions that all the citizens with one voice rejected them, and took the Lord of Piombino under their special protection, promising that while he did not give himself up, but remained as heretofore steadfast in his own defence, they would stand by him in peace or in war. On hearing of this decision, and knowing that from the weakness of his army he could not take the town, the King after suffering what was almost a defeat withdrew from the siege of Piombino, and, leaving behind him two thousand of his army dead, led the fever-stricken survivors first into the Sienese territory and thence into the Kingdom, furious with the Florentines, whom he threatened with a renewal of war in the coming spring. 1448.

§ 17. While these events were passing in Tuscany, in Lombardy the first endeavour of Count Francesco Sforza on being made Captain by the Milanese was to gain the friendship of Francesco Piccinino, who was then serving under the Milanese flag, so that he might either favour his designs, or at any rate be less disposed to thwart them. After this he led his army into the field. Whereupon the citizens of Pavia, seeing they could not hold out against him, 1447.

1447. yet unwilling to render obedience to the Milanese, offered him their town on condition that he would not subject it to the Government of Milan. The Count was most desirous to get possession of this city, as affording facilities for cloaking and carrying out his schemes; nor was he withheld by any sense of shame, nor by any scruple as to breaking faith, for it is failure only, not fraudulent success, that great men deem disgraceful; but he feared that by accepting it he might so exasperate the Milanese that they would give themselves up to the Venetians. On the other hand, if he declined it, there was the danger that the Duke of Savoy, to whom many of the citizens desired to surrender it, might get it. Either alternative was likely to prevent the Count becoming Lord of Lombardy. Nevertheless, judging that there was less risk in taking the city himself than in letting another take it, and trusting to be able to pacify the Milanese, he decided to accept. To the Milanese therefore he set forth the dangers that would have been incurred by his not accepting, since the citizens of Pavia would then have given it to the Venetians, or to the Duke of Savoy, in either of which cases Milan must have lost all hold over it. And he showed them that they ought to be better pleased to have him, who was their friend, as a neighbour, than a power like either of the others, which must needs be their enemy. The Milanese were much disquieted by what had happened, since the Count's ambition, and the ends at which he aimed, stood thereby revealed. But they deemed it prudent not to show their displeasure, for were they to separate from the Count they saw no one to whom they could turn except the Venetians, whose pride

and hard conditions they dreaded. Accordingly they 1447.
resolved not to part from the Count, but meanwhile to use him to protect them against the dangers that threatened them, in the hope that once freed from these, they might also rid themselves of him. For they were assailed not only by the Venetians, but likewise by the Genoese and the Duke of Savoy, supporting the claim of Charles of Orleans who was son of Duke Filippo's sister. This last attack, however, the Count repulsed with little effort, so that the only enemies left were the Venetians, who sought with a powerful army to seize on Milan, and already held Lodi and Piacenza. To Piacenza the Count laid siege, and, after a long and obstinate defence, took it and sacked it. The season being now advanced he led back his soldiers into quarters, and went himself to Cremona, where, with his bride, he reposed throughout the winter.

§ 18. On the return of spring both the Venetian 1448.
and Milanese armies took the field. The Milanese were set on the recovery of Lodi, intending thereafter to make terms with the Venetians; for, wearied with the cost of war, and distrusting the fidelity of their Captain, they greatly desired peace, that they might have rest for themselves and come to a settlement with the Count. Accordingly they decided that their army should advance and seize Caravaggio, in the hope that when that fortress had fallen Lodi would at once surrender. The Count, though his own desire was to cross the Adda and invade the Brescian territory, obeyed orders, and encamping against Caravaggio so fortified himself with trenches

1448. and breastworks that the Venetians, if they tried to raise the siege, must attack at a disadvantage. The Venetians on their part came with their army, under their Captain Micheletto, to about two bowshots from the Count's camp, where they remained for several days, engaging in frequent skirmishes. Nevertheless the Count continued to press the siege, and had brought matters to such a point that the surrender of the fortress seemed certain. This sorely troubled the Venetians, who looked on its loss as fatal to their schemes of conquest. After much debate among their Captains as to how Caravaggio might be relieved, it was at last agreed that there was nothing for it but to get within the enemies' defences, and fight them there. This could only be done at a disadvantage; but the loss of Caravaggio was held to be so serious a matter that the Venetian Senate, though habitually timid, and adverse to doubtful or dangerous courses, were willing to run any risk to save it. It being therefore decided to attack the Count at all hazards, the Venetians getting under arms at daybreak made their assault on his camp at the point where it was least guarded, and, as commonly happens in the case of a surprise, threw his whole forces into confusion by their first onset. Order, however, was soon restored by the Count, and the enemy after often renewed efforts to storm the breastworks were not merely driven off but so utterly routed and broken, that of their whole army, numbering over twelve thousand horsemen, not a thousand escaped, while all their stores and baggage wagons were taken. Never before had the Venetians suffered so terrible and crushing a defeat. Among the

captives a Venetian *Provveditore* was discovered in 1448.
doleful mood, who during the campaign and before the battle had spoken disparagingly of the Count, calling him bastard and coward, and who now, finding himself a prisoner, remembering his unseemly scoffs, and expecting to be rewarded according to his deserts, came before the Count in fear and trembling (it being the nature of the proud and cowardly to be insolent in prosperity, grovelling and abject in adversity), and throwing himself on his knees, with tears besought pardon for the insults he had spoken. The Count, raising him, took him by the arm and bade him be of good heart and hope. He then said to him that he wondered that a man so grave and prudent as he would seem to be, should so mistake as to speak evil of those who nowise deserved it. As to what he upbraided him with, not having been present at the time, he himself knew nothing of what passed between his father Sforza and Madonna Lucia his mother, nor could he have controlled their relations; he therefore was neither to be praised nor blamed for anything they might have done; but he was conscious that in all that concerned himself personally, he had so borne himself that no man could reproach him; to which both the prisoner and his Senate could bear true and fresh testimony. Wherefore he warned him for the future to speak of others with more modesty, and make his attacks with greater caution.

§ 19. After this success the Count led his victorious troops into the territory of Brescia, and taking possession of the entire country pitched his camp about two miles from the city. Meanwhile the Venetians, rightly

1448. conjecturing that after their defeat Brescia would be the first point to be struck at, had thrown into that town as strong a garrison as they could in haste get together, and had then used all diligence in raising new forces and rallying what remnants were left of their army. In virtue of their League, they sought assistance from the Florentines, who, being now relieved of the war with King Alfonso, sent to their aid a thousand foot-soldiers and two thousand horse. Thus reinforced they were in a position to consider how they might come to terms. For a long period it had been, as it were, the destiny of the Venetian Republic to lose in war and gain in negotiating peace, so that often what they lost by the one was made up to them twofold by the other. The Venetians knew how much the Milanese distrusted the Count, and how it was his aim to be their Lord and not merely their Captain, and since it lay in their option to make peace with either side, the one desiring it from ambition, the other through fear, they elected to make it with the Count, and to offer him their assistance in carrying out his designs. For they were convinced that the Milanese, on finding themselves deceived by Count Francesco, would out of resentment submit themselves to any other sooner than to him; and when so straitened that they could neither defend themselves nor any longer trust their Captain, having none else to whom to turn, must needs fall into the lap of Venice. Their plans thus laid, they sounded the Count's intentions and found him eager for peace; for he desired that the victory won at Caravaggio should be for himself and not for the citizens of Milan. Accordingly a bargain was struck, whereby the

Venetians bound themselves to pay the Count thirteen thousand florins monthly while he remained out of possession of Milan, and to assist him while the struggle lasted with four thousand horsemen and two thousand foot; while the Count on his part bound himself to restore to the Venetians the towns, prisoners, and all other spoils taken by him in the late war, reserving for himself such towns only as had been held by Duke Filippo at the time of his death. 1448.

§ 20. When this compact became known in Milan, it saddened that city far more than the victory of Caravaggio had cheered it. The leading citizens grieved, the populace murmured, women and children wept, all denounced the Count as perfidious and disloyal, and though without hope of dissuading him either by prayers or promises from his hateful purpose, they sent envoys to note with what face and with what words he justified his treachery. Coming into his presence one of their number addressed him to this effect: 'It is usual with those who would obtain anything of another to approach him with entreaties and promises or to menace him with threats, so that moved by compassion, by self-interest, or by fear, he may be influenced to do as they desire. But with men who are at once cruel and greedy, and who think they can do as they please, none of these methods is of any efficacy, since it were vain to think of melting them by prayers, winning them by promises, or daunting them by threats. Wherefore we, knowing now, alas, too late! your cruelty, ambition, and pride, come before you, not to solicit any favour from you, nor with any hope of obtaining it were we to ask it, but

1448. to remind you of the benefits you have received from the people of Milan, and to tell you plainly with what ingratitude you have requited them; that thus, amid the many ills we suffer, we may at least have the satisfaction of reproaching you with them. You must well remember in what position you stood after Duke Filippo died. You were at war with the Pope and with the King; by the Florentines and Venetians whom you had abandoned you were regarded (as well from their natural and recent resentment as because they had no longer need of you), almost as an enemy. Worn out by the struggle you had maintained against the Church, with few followers, without friends, without money, and without the least hope of being able to hold your estates or support your old renown, all must inevitably have been lost to you had it not been for our simplicity. For we alone gave you shelter out of reverence to the happy memory of our Duke, believing that as you had entered into a new connection and friendship with him, your affection would extend to his heirs; and that if, in addition to the benefits which he had conferred upon you, further benefits were bestowed by us, your friendship would become not merely firm but indissoluble. For which reasons we added Brescia, or in place of it Verona, to the territories formerly assigned you. What more could we give or promise you? And what more was there which you at that time, I will not say could obtain, but even desire to obtain, whether from us or from any other? But as you then received at our hands unhoped-for benefits, so now from you we receive unthought-of injuries. Nor do you now for the first time reveal your hostile disposition towards us. For no sooner

were you appointed to the command of our army than, 1448.
contrary to every sentiment of right, you accepted for yourself the submission of Pavia, a treachery which should have warned us how we might expect this friendship of yours to end. This, however, we put up with, in the belief that an acquisition so great might satisfy even your aspirations. But, alas! no part will ever content him who must have the whole. You promised that all your subsequent conquests should accrue to us, knowing well that what from time to time you gave us, you could at a stroke resume; as happened after the victory of Caravaggio which, won by our blood and with our money, was followed by our ruin. Unhappy the cities that have to defend their liberties against the ambition of an oppressor, but thrice unhappy those that must defend themselves with mercenary and perfidious arms like yours. And since the example of the Thebans (when Philip of Macedon, after obtaining a victory over their enemies, from being their Captain became their foe and, in the end, their tyrant) did not suffice to put us on our guard, at least let our example serve as a warning to after ages. And yet no other fault can be laid to our charge than that we trusted much to one to whom we should have trusted little. For your past life, your boundless ambition never satisfied with any rank or station, ought to have made us cautious. Nor should we have built our hopes on him who had betrayed the Lord of Lucca, blackmailed the Florentines and Venetians, defied our Duke, flouted the King of Naples, and, worst of all, heaped so many wrongs on God and on the Church. Nor ought we ever to have supposed that we could influence the mind of Francesco Sforza

1448. when these great Princes could not do so, or that he would observe with us the faith he had so often broken with them. But that lack of prudence whereof we stand convicted neither extenuates your perfidy nor purges you of the infamy which our just complaints will breed against you in all lands. Nor will it allay the righteous sting of conscience when those arms made ready by us to be a terror and offence to others are turned to strike and wound ourselves; for by your own judgment you will stand condemned to such punishment as parricides deserve. Nay, though ambition should blind your conscience, the whole world which has witnessed your iniquity will force you to open your eyes. God Himself, if perjury, broken pledges, and treachery offend Him, will force you to open them; unless, as hitherto for some good purpose hidden from us, it be His pleasure always to be the friend of wicked men. Nor count on an assured victory, for the just anger of God will stand in your way, and we ourselves are ready to lay down our lives in defence of our freedom, which, if we cannot save, we are prepared to sacrifice to any other potentate sooner than to you. And if our sins have been such that in spite of all our efforts we must be delivered into your hands, be sure that the reign begun by you in fraud and infamy will end, either with you or with your children, in disgrace and ruin.'

§ 21. The Count, although feeling all the venom of this attack, without betraying by word or gesture any extraordinary resentment, made answer 'that he was willing to attribute to their angry mood the grave wrong done him by their imprudent words, to which,

were he before any one with whom it rested to decide 1448.
their differences, he would reply in detail, when it would be seen that so far from injuring the Milanese, he had only provided against their injuring him. For they well knew how they had behaved after the victory of Caravaggio, when, instead of rewarding him with Verona or Brescia, they had sought to make peace with the Venetians, so that the scathe of enmity might rest on him alone, while the fruits of victory, the delights of peace, and all the advantages accruing from the war, were to be enjoyed by them. They could not therefore complain if he had concluded an accord which they first had tried to bring about. Had he delayed for a moment to take this course, he would now have had to tax them with the very same ingratitude wherewith they were reproaching him. Whether or no there was ground for their reproaches, would, by that God to whom they had appealed to redress their wrongs, be shown in the issue of the war, when it would be seen which of them was most His friend and whose the juster cause.'

The envoys gone, the Count prepared to attack the Milanese, who on their part made ready for their defence, trusting with the help of Francesco and Jacopo Piccinino (who by reason of the old feud between the followers of Braccio and Sforza were staunch to Milan), to defend their liberty, at any rate until they were able to detach the Venetians from the Count; for between these two they were sure that friendship and fidelity could not be lasting. The Count, however, who was aware of this danger, bethought him that as covenants alone might not suffice to bind the Venetians, it would be well to bind them by interest. Accordingly, in

1448. distributing the operations of the campaign, he was content that the Venetians should assail Crema, while he with the rest of the army attacked other portions of the Milanese territory. The inducement thus held out to the Venetians had the effect of keeping them true to their friendship with the Count until he had overrun the entire territory of Milan, and had so cooped up the Milanese within their walls that they were cut off from all necessary supplies. Whereupon, in despair of other relief, they sent envoys to Venice to implore the Venetians to have pity on them, and be pleased, in accordance with the usages which should prevail between Republics, to favour their freedom rather than the tyranny of one whom, were he to succeed in making himself master of Milan, they would be unable to control. Nor were they to believe that, in deference to any conditions agreed on between him and them, he would respect the ancient limits of their State. The Venetians, not being as yet masters of Crema, and desiring to be possessed of it before they changed front, replied publicly to the envoys that by reason of their engagements with the Count they could not assist them; privately, however, they entertained them with hopes, which they might communicate to their Signors, that an accord would certainly be arrived at.

1449. § 22. The Count and his forces had already got so close to Milan that fighting was going on in the suburbs, when the Venetians, having taken Crema, thought they must delay no longer to make friends with the Milanese, with whom, therefore, they came to an accord; one of the chief conditions of which

was an absolute undertaking to protect their freedom. 1449.
On concluding this agreement they sent word to their troops serving under Count Francesco to leave his camp and retire into the Venetian territory. They also notified to the Count the peace they had concluded with the Milanese, and gave him twenty days within which to accept it. The Count was not surprised at the action taken by the Venetians, for he had long foreseen it, and had lived in fear of what might any day happen. Still, when it did happen, he could not but feel hurt, and be moved by the same displeasure as the Milanese had felt when abandoned by him. From the envoys sent by Venice to notify the accord he obtained two days to give his answer, during which time he made up his mind to keep the Venetians amused, without renouncing his enterprise. Accordingly he publicly gave out that he was ready to accept the peace, and sent envoys to Venice with full authority to ratify it; privately, however, he charged them on no account to ratify, but to protract, negotiations by every cavil and pretext they could devise. To lead the Venetians to credit his professions, he made a truce with the Milanese for a month, and withdrawing his soldiers to some distance from the city, quartered them in the surrounding villages of which he had taken possession. By this course he secured victory for himself and brought destruction on the Milanese. For the Venetians, looking on peace as certain, remitted their warlike preparations, while the Milanese, seeing a truce concluded, their enemy withdrawn, and the Venetians become their friends, were convinced that the Count must relinquish his design. This belief harmed them in two ways, for

1449. first, they neglected precautions necessary for their defence; and secondly, as the country was left free by the enemy, and it was now seed-time, they sowed much grain, thereby making it all the easier for the Count to reduce them afterwards by famine. All which things, while hurtful to his enemies, were advantageous to the Count; moreover, the delay gave him time to breathe and look about him for help.

§ 23. In this war of Lombardy the Florentines had not declared themselves in behalf of the one side or the other; nor had they shown any favour to the Count either while he was fighting for the Milanese or against them; for standing in no need of their support, he had used no effort to obtain it. After the rout of Caravaggio they had indeed, in compliance with their obligations under the League, sent aid to the Venetians. But now that he was left entirely alone, he was forced, having no one else to whom to turn, to ask immediate help from Florence, both publicly from the Government and privately from his own friends—above all, from Cosimo de' Medici, with whom he had always maintained a close intimacy, and by whom in all his enterprises he had been honestly advised and liberally assisted. Nor in this his hour of need did Cosimo fail him, but helped him bountifully from his private resources, and encouraged him to carry out his undertaking. Cosimo was desirous that the city also should support him, but in this he found difficulty. Neri, son of Gino Capponi, was extremely powerful in Florence. He saw no advantage likely to accrue to his city from Count Francesco getting possession of Milan, and indeed considered it

more for the welfare of Italy that he should ratify the peace than that he should prolong the war. For, in the first place, he feared that the Milanese, in their anger against the Count, would throw themselves wholly into the hands of the Venetians, which would be the ruin of every one. In the second place, he thought that should the Count succeed in getting possession of Milan, the union of arms so powerful with so great a State was to be dreaded; for if Francesco Sforza was insupportable as a Count, he would be infinitely more so as a Duke. Wherefore he maintained that it was better, both for Florence and for all Italy, that the Count should rest content with his renown in arms, while Lombardy might be divided into two Republics, which never would combine to attack others, and neither of which would be formidable by itself; and this end he thought might best be served by withholding help from the Count, and maintaining the old League with the Venetians. These views were not accepted by the friends of Cosimo, who thought Neri influenced, not by any belief that what he proposed would be advantageous to Florence, but only by his desire that Count Francesco, being Cosimo's friend, should not become Duke, fearing that if he did, Cosimo would grow too powerful. Cosimo, on the other hand, argued that to aid the Count would be most advantageous both to Florence and Italy, since it were folly to suppose that the Milanese could ever preserve their freedom; for their institutions, their mode of life, the feuds inveterate in their city, were all so opposed to any form of free Government, that Milan must needs fall either under the Dukedom of 1449.

1449. Francesco Sforza or under the Signory of Venice. That being so, there was no one so unwise as to doubt that it was better to have for neighbour a powerful friend than a most powerful foe. Nor did he believe there was ground for fear that the Milanese, because they were at war with the Count, would yield themselves up to the Venetians; for the Count had a following in Milan while the others had none, so that whenever the Milanese found they could not defend themselves as freemen, they would always prefer to make their submission to the Count rather than to the Venetians. This conflict of opinion kept the city for a long time in suspense, but at last it was resolved to send envoys to the Count to discuss arrangements for an accord, which they were to conclude if they found him strong enough to make his success likely; otherwise to interpose difficulties and delays.

1450. § 24. On reaching Reggio the envoys learnt that the Count was already Lord of Milan. For on the expiry of the truce he had at once renewed the siege of the town, hoping soon to get possession in spite of the Venetians, who could send no succour except by the river Adda, the passage by which he could easily block; indeed, as winter had now set in, he had no fear of their taking the field against him, and before winter was over he reckoned on having secured a victory. Of this he felt the more certain inasmuch as Francesco Piccinino was now dead, and his brother Jacopo left in sole command of the Milanese forces. The Venetians had despatched an envoy to Milan exhorting the citizens to make a

stubborn defence, and promising them great and speedy assistance. During the winter some unimportant skirmishing took place between the Count and the Venetians, but, on the season becoming milder, the latter, under Pandolfo Malatesta, encamped their army on the Adda. A council of war being held here, to decide whether, for the relief of Milan, they should attack the Count and try the fortune of battle, Pandolfo their Captain gave it as his opinion that, having regard to the known valour of the Count and of his army, they ought not to attempt it. He thought, however, that without fighting they would have a safe victory, as the Count was in great straits from the scarcity of corn and forage. He therefore advised that they should stay where they were encamped, as this would give the Milanese hopes of succour, and prevent them from surrendering in despair to the Count. This course was approved by the Venetians, both as safe in itself, and because they believed that by keeping the Milanese in their present difficulties they would force them to submit to their power; for they were persuaded that, mindful of all the wrongs she had suffered at the hands of Sforza, Milan would never surrender to him. Meanwhile the Milanese were brought to the verge of famine, and as the town at all times abounds in poor people, these were dying of hunger in the streets, so that grief and lamentation prevailed throughout the city. The Magistrates were in great alarm, and did their utmost to hinder the people from assembling in numbers. 1450.

The multitude is slow to be bent to evil courses, but once bent, every little thing stirs it. Near the

1450. Porta Nuova two men of humble station were talking together of the calamities of the city, of their own misery, and the means of saving themselves; others came and joined them until a crowd had gathered; whereupon a rumour spread through Milan that the people of the Porta Nuova had risen in arms against the Magistrates. On this the entire populace, which was in hourly expectation of a rising, appeared in arms, and after choosing Gasparre di Vicomercato to be their leader, proceeded to where the Magistrates were assembled, and falling fiercely upon them, put to death all who could not make their escape. Among others they slew Lionardo Veniero, the Venetian envoy, as being the cause of, and as rejoicing in, their sufferings. Having thus in a manner become the rulers of the city, they debated among themselves how they were to get rid of their troubles and at last find rest. All were agreed that since they could not preserve their freedom they must seek shelter under a power able to protect them, some proposing to invite King Alfonso to be their Lord, some the Duke of Savoy, others the King of France. None, however, ventured to propose the Count, so violent was the hatred wherewith they still regarded him. But when they could come to no agreement as to the others, Gasparre of Vicomercato was first to name the Count, showing the people at great length that if they would have the war lifted from their backs, there was nothing for it but to call him in; for the people of Milan stood in need of a sure and present peace, not of deferred hopes of future succour. He excused the course followed by the Count, and accused the Venetians and all the other powers of Italy of having, some from ambition, others

from envy, been unwilling that the Milanese should live in freedom. But since their freedom had to be given up, let it be to one who was able and ready to defend them, so that their servitude might at least bring them peace and protection, not heavier afflictions and a still more dangerous war. He was listened to with extraordinary attention, and when he ceased speaking, all shouted with one voice that the Count should be called in, and that Gasparre should be their envoy to call him. Accordingly, at the command of the people, Gasparre went to find Count Francesco, carrying to him the joyful and happy tidings, which he no less joyfully received, and on the twenty-sixth day of February 1450, entering Milan as Prince, was welcomed with the greatest and most astonishing delight by those who not long before had railed at him with so much virulence. 1450.

§ 25. On the news of this event reaching Florence, instructions were sent to the Florentine envoys, who were still on their way, that they were to go forward, no longer to treat for an accord with the *Count*, but to congratulate the *Duke* on his good fortune. They were received with marked distinction, and abundantly honoured by the Duke, who well knew that against the power of the Venetians he could have no stauncher or more trusty friends in Italy than the Florentines, who, freed from their fears of the House of the Visconti, would now in all likelihood have to combat the Aragonese and the Venetians. For the Aragonese Kings of Naples were hostile to Florence by reason of the friendship which they knew that the Florentine people had always borne towards the House of

1450. France. The Venetians, too, recognising that the old Florentine fear of the Visconti was exchanged for a new fear of Venice, remembering with what animosity the Florentines had pursued the Visconti, and dreading to be the objects of a like hostility, now sought their ruin. These considerations made it easy for the new Duke to enter into closer relations with the Florentines, and at the same time led the Venetians and King Alfonso to join in a League against their common enemies, whereby they bound themselves to begin hostilities simultaneously, the King assailing the Florentines, the Venetians the Duke, who, being new to his Government, would, they thought, be unable to withstand them either with his own forces or by the aid of others. But inasmuch as the League between the Florentines and the Venetians was still binding, and King Alfonso after the war of Piombino had concluded a treaty with Florence, it was deemed inexpedient to disturb peace until a pretext was found to justify war. Both powers accordingly sent envoys to
1451. Florence, representing on behalf of their masters that the League into which they had entered was not a League of offence against any one, but merely for the protection of their own dominions. The Venetian envoy, however, went on to complain that the Florentines had given leave to Alessandro, the Duke's brother, to pass with his troops through Lunigiana into Lombardy, and moreover had contrived and advised the accord entered into between the Duke and the Marquis of Mantua. These doings, he alleged, were adverse to the Venetian Government, and inconsistent with the friendly relations in which Venice stood to Florence. Wherefore, with all love,

he would remind them that he who wrongfully offends 1451.
gives others occasion to be rightfully offended, and that he who breaks peace may expect war.

Cosimo, being charged by the Signory to reply, recounted, in a long but temperate speech, all the benefits rendered by his city to the Venetian Republic, showed how greatly the dominions of Venice had been extended by the money, the troops, and the counsels of the Florentines, and declared that as the foundations of friendship had been laid by the Florentines, no cause for enmity would ever come from them. As they had always been lovers of peace, they were well pleased at the accord concluded between the Venetians and the King of Naples, provided always it was entered into with pacific and not with hostile intentions. At the same time, he was greatly astonished at the complaints which had been made, and at finding so great a Republic as that of Venice attach so much importance to matters trifling and insignificant. But if these matters were in any way worth considering, they made it clear to every one that it was the desire of the Florentines that their country should be free and open to all. As for the Duke, he was not the man to need advice or support from them in entering into an alliance with Mantua. It might be suspected, therefore, that these complaints had a venom in them other than appeared on the surface; if that were so, the Florentines would easily make all know that their enmity was as dangerous as their friendship useful.

§ 26. At the time the matter passed off lightly, and it seemed as though the envoys went away fairly satisfied. Nevertheless the fact of this League having

1451. been formed, together with the behaviour of the Venetians and the King, led the Florentines and the Duke rather to fear a new war than hope for an enduring peace. The Florentines, therefore, drew still closer to the Duke, whereupon the ill-will of the Venetians became apparent, for they entered into a League with the Sienese, and expelled from Venice and her dominions all Florentine citizens or subjects. Soon after Alfonso also did the like, without the slightest regard for the treaty of the year before, and without, not to say just, but even colourable cause. The Venetians next sought to get hold of Bologna, and reinforcing the Bolognese exiles with a strong body of their own troops, sent them by night through the sewers into the town, where their entrance was not discovered till they themselves began to raise an uproar. This awoke Santi Bentivoglio, who found the whole town occupied by the rebels. Though many counselled him to save his life by flight, since he could not save the city by his presence, he determined to face Fortune, and arming himself bade his party take heart, and at the head of a body of his friends attacked and routed the rebels, of whom he slew many and drove the rest from the town. Whereby he was judged by every one to have given indubitable proof that he was truly of the House of the Bentivogli.

These acts and indications of hostility created in Florence a sure expectation that war was impending, and accordingly the Florentines resorted to their ancient and customary methods of defence, appointing the Magistracy of the Ten, engaging new Condottiere, and sending envoys to Rome, Naples, Venice, Milan, and Siena, to ask aid from friends, come to a clear

understanding with those whom they distrusted, secure 1451.
the wavering, and unveil the designs of enemies. From the Pope nothing was obtained beyond a general expression of goodwill, and exhortations to peace. From the King came empty excuses for having sent away the Florentines, with offers to grant letters of safe-conduct to any who might ask for them. But though Alfonso tried to conceal altogether his design of a new war, the envoys recognised his unfriendly disposition, and discovered many of the preparations he was making for the invasion of their Republic. The League with the Duke was now strengthened by various new covenants, and through his mediation peace was secured, and ancient differences in respect of reprisals and other causes of contention were adjusted with the Genoese, though the Venetians used every device to hinder their settlement. For in such a spirit of hatred did the Venetians engage in this war, and so passionate was their desire for mastery, that they felt no scruple in attempting to destroy those who had promoted their greatness, even supplicating the Emperor of Constantinople, by whom, however, they were not listened to, to banish the Florentine nation from his dominions. The Florentine envoys were forbidden by the Venetian Senate to enter the territories of their Republic, on the pretext that, being in alliance with the King, they could not hear them without his participation. By the Sienese, who feared they might be crushed before the League could come to their defence, and therefore thought it politic to cajole a power they could not resist, the envoys were received with fair words. The Venetians and the King, in order, as was then believed, to obtain justification for the war, proposed

1451. to send envoys to Florence, but the Venetian envoy was not permitted to enter the Florentine territory, and the King's envoy refusing to act alone, the embassy was not carried out. The Venetians were thus made to know that they were despised by those Florentines whom they had slighted a few months before.

§ 27. While the alarm caused by these incidents prevailed, the Emperor Frederick III. came into Italy
1452. to be crowned, and on the 30th day of January 1451 made his entry into Florence with a retinue of fifteen hundred horsemen. Here he was received with highest honours by the Signory, and remained till the 6th of February, when he proceeded to Rome for his coronation. After being crowned there with great solemnity, and after his marriage with the Empress, who had come thither by sea, had been celebrated, he turned his steps homeward, and in the month of May passed again through Florence, where the same honours were paid him as on his former visit. On his way to Germany he, in requital of attentions received from the Marquis of Ferrara, made him a grant of Modena and Reggio.

Meanwhile the Florentines failed not to prepare for the impending war, and to add to their prestige, and inspire fear in their enemies, they, along with the Duke, entered into a League with the King of France for the common defence of their territories, which they proclaimed with great pomp and rejoicing throughout all Italy. In May of the year 1452 the Venetians decided to delay no longer opening war against the Duke, and attacked him on the side of Lodi with an

army of sixteen thousand horse and six thousand foot. 1452.
At the same time the Marquis of Monferrat, whether prompted by personal ambition or incited by the Venetians, also attacked him on the side of Alessandria. The Duke, on his part, had got together eighteen thousand horse and three thousand foot, and after placing garrisons in Alessandria and Lodi, and strengthening in like manner all the places where the enemy could harm him, invaded the Brescian territory, where he inflicted great injury on the Venetians, wasting the country on every side, and pillaging the undefended villages. On the defeat of the Marquis of Monferrat by the Ducal forces at Alessandria, the Duke was able to oppose a larger army to the Venetians, and assail them nearer home.

§ 28. While war was being waged in Lombardy with varying fortune, but without marked or memorable achievement, another war was at the same time begun in Tuscany between King Alfonso and the Florentines, in which no greater valour or enterprise was shown than in Lombardy. Ferrando, son of Alfonso, but born out of wedlock, invaded Tuscany with twelve thousand mercenaries commanded by Federigo, Lord of Urbino, whose first exploit was to attack Fojano in the Val di Chiana; for having the Sienese for friends it was on this side they entered the Florentine territory. The walls of Fojano were weak, and the village being small contained few inhabitants, but these renowned in their day for courage and fidelity. It had besides been strengthened by two hundred soldiers sent by the Signory expressly for its defence. Against this fortress thus guarded Ferrando encamped, but so great was the

1452. valour of the defenders, or his own so defective, that it was only after thirty-six days' siege that he succeeded in taking it. Time was thus given the Signory to gather their forces, and post them to greater advantage, and also to supply other fortresses of more importance with the necessary means of defence. After the capture of Fojano the enemy advanced into the Chianti district, where they failed to storm two small country houses occupied by private citizens. Leaving these behind, they next encamped against Castellina, a stronghold on the confines of Chianti, about ten miles from Siena, weakly fortified, and most disadvantageously situated. Yet with both these circumstances in their favour the assailants were unable to turn them to account, and after a siege of forty-four days had to retire with dishonour; for so formidable were the armies of those times, and so perilous these wars, that towns which at the present day would be abandoned as incapable of defence were then defended as though impregnable. While Ferrando was encamped in the Chianti country he made many raids and incursions into the Florentine territory, approaching within six miles of the city, to the great alarm and injury of Florentine subjects. Meanwhile the Florentines had moved their troops, numbering about eight thousand men, commanded by Astorre of Faenza and Gismondo Malatesta, to the stronghold of Colle, keeping them at some distance from the enemy so as not to be forced to a general engagement; for they believed that unless defeated in a pitched battle they would not suffer seriously by the war, since any petty fortresses which might be taken from them would be recovered when peace was restored, while as regards greater ones they

had no misgivings, the enemy being in no condition to attack these. Besides his land forces the King had also a fleet of sloops and galleys, to the number of twenty ships, in the Pisan waters, so that while Castellina was being besieged by land, the fleet anchored off the fortress of Vada, which, through the remissness of the Governor, it succeeded in taking. Thereby the enemy were afterwards able to harass the surrounding country; which annoyance, however, was speedily removed by a company of soldiers sent by the Florentines to Campiglia, who confined the King's troops to the coast. 1452.

§ 29. In these hostilities the Pope took no part, save by endeavouring to bring about an accord between the combatants. But while thus abstaining from wars abroad, he was fated to encounter a more formidable danger at home. There lived at this time a Roman citizen named Stefano Porcari, noble by birth and for his learning, but still more noble from the goodness of his heart. As is the wont of those who thirst for fame, it was his desire to achieve, or at least attempt, something worthy to be remembered. And he judged there was nothing nobler he could attempt than to liberate his country from the yoke of the Prelates, and restore it to its ancient freedom; hoping, should he succeed in this, to be spoken of as the new founder and second father of Rome. What much encouraged him to look for success in this enterprise was the foul lives of the Roman clergy, and the discontent of the Roman barons; but above all, he was kindled by the verses of Petrarch in that Canzone which begins '*Spirto gentil, che quelle membra reggi*,' where he says:—

'Sopra il monte Tarpeo, canzon, vedrai
Un cavalier ch' Italia tutta onora,
Pensoso più d' altrui che di se stesso.'[1]

For as Messer Stefano knew that poets are oftentimes inspired with a prophetic and divine afflatus, he took it as certain that what Petrarch foretold in this Canzone would come to pass, and that it was he himself who was to carry out this most glorious adventure; for he knew that in eloquence, learning, favour, and friends, he surpassed any other Roman. Fallen upon this way of thinking, he was unable so to control himself as not to betray by words, actions, and mode of living the designs he meditated. In consequence he became suspected by the Pope, who to deprive him of opportunity for doing mischief banished him to Bologna, where the Governor was charged to see him daily. Nothing daunted by this first check, Messer Stefano pursued his plans with increased zeal, corresponding with his friends with all possible secrecy, and frequently going to and returning from Rome so rapidly that he had time to present himself before the Governor within the prescribed hours. When he thought he had secured a sufficient following, he resolved to delay no longer the execution of his design, and desired his friends in Rome to arrange for a solemn banquet to be given on a fixed date, to which all the conspirators should be invited, with notice to each to bring with him his most trusted friends, Stefano himself promising to be with them before the feast was over. All was done as he directed, and Messer Stefano arrived at the house

[1] 'Upon Tarpeia's rock shalt thou descry
A knight, in honour held by all the land;
Heedful for others more than for himself.'

where the banquet was to be held. When the tables were laid, Messer Stefano clad in cloth of gold, and, to enhance the majesty of his appearance, adorned with chains and jewels, came among the guests, and after embracing them spoke to them at length, exhorting them to nerve their courage and prepare to carry out a noble enterprise. He then allotted the part each was to play, giving order that at daybreak one band should seize on the Pope's palace, another parade the streets and call the people to arms. That same night the Pope had notice of what was going on; some say through treachery among the conspirators, others that Messer Stefano's arrival in Rome had already been reported. However this may be, the Pope, on the very night on which the banquet was held, caused Messer Stefano and most of his companions to be arrested, and afterwards had them put to death, as their offence deserved. Such was the end of Messer Stefano's conspiracy; and, to say truth, though some may applaud his aims, there can be none but will condemn his judgment; for though attempts of this sort have some shadow of glory in their conception, they are almost certain to bring ruin with them in their execution. 1453.

§ 30. The war in Tuscany had now lasted for nearly a year, and the season being come for the armies to resume operations in the field, Alessandro Sforza, brother of the Duke, came to the assistance of the Florentines with two thousand horsemen. The Florentine army being thereby strengthened, and that of the King having meanwhile fallen away, the Florentines now sought to retrieve their losses, and succeeded without much effort in recovering several of their strongholds. They then

1453. encamped near Fojano, which had been taken and sacked through the failure of the Commissaries to relieve it, and whose inhabitants having been dispersed could hardly be induced, even by exemption from taxes and other favours, to return and dwell there. The fortress of Vada was also recovered, the enemy having set fire to and abandoned it on finding they could not hold it. While the Tuscan army was thus occupied, the Aragonese forces, not venturing to face their enemy in the field, had retired to the neighbourhood of Siena, whence they made frequent inroads into Tuscan territory, where their ravages occasioned the utmost terror and dismay.

To compel the Florentines to divide their forces, and to dishearten them with new difficulties and dangers, the King now sought to assail them from another quarter. Gherardo Gambacorti and his ancestors, Lords of the Val di Bagno, through friendship or on compulsion, had always been in the pay or under the protection of the Florentines. With him Alfonso secretly intrigued for the surrender of his Lordship, for which he undertook to recompense him by granting him another Lordship within the Kingdom. This intrigue being revealed in Florence, an envoy was sent to Gherardo to ascertain his intentions, to remind him of the obligations his ancestors and he owed to the Florentine Republic, and to exhort him to remain faithful. Gherardo, feigning astonishment, protested with solemn oaths that so wicked a thought had never entered his mind, and declared that as a pledge of his loyalty he would himself have gone to Florence, but being in poor health, would do through his son what he could not do himself; and so consigned the lad to

the envoy, who carried him off with him to Florence. 1453.
Gherardo's words and bearing led the Florentines to believe he spoke the truth, and that his accuser was a liar and busybody, and thereupon they dismissed this cause of anxiety from their minds. But Gherardo continuing his negotiations with the King with increased urgency, the bargain was struck, and Fra Puccio, a Knight of Jerusalem, was sent by the King with a strong force into the Val di Bagno to take over from Gherardo possession of his fortresses and villages. The people of Bagno, being well affected to the Florentine Republic, most reluctantly promised obedience to the Commissaries of the King. Fra Puccio had now taken over almost the whole territory, the stronghold of Corsano alone remaining to be delivered up. Among those whom Gherardo had about him while thus transferring his possessions was a certain Antonio Gualandi of Pisa, a high-spirited youth to whom Gherardo's treason was odious. While Gherardo stood at the gate of the fortress of Corsano to give admission to the Aragonese soldiery, Antonio, observing the strong position of the place, and noting in their looks and gestures the displeasure of the garrison, suddenly slipped within the portal and with both hands thrust Gherardo out, calling on the garrison to bar their gates in the face of such a traitor, and save the castle for the Florentine Republic. When news of this reached Bagno and the other villages of the neighbourhood, the whole population took arms, and raising the Florentine standard drove the Aragonese from the country. On this being reported in Florence, the Florentines cast Gherardo's son who had been given them as a hostage into prison, and sent troops to Bagno to hold the

1453. country for the Republic, substituting a Governorship for the former rule under a Prince. Gherardo, the betrayer of his liege-lords and of his own son, with difficulty made his escape, leaving his wife, family, and substance in the hands of his enemies. The affair was regarded in Florence as one of much importance, for had the King succeeded in possessing himself of this territory, he could afterwards, at small cost, have raided at will into the Val di Tevere and the Casentino, and so harassed the Florentines that they could not have opposed their entire strength to the Aragonese army lying at Siena.

§ 31. Besides the measures taken in Italy to withstand the hostile League, the Florentines had sent Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli as envoy to the King of France to ask his consent that King René of Anjou should come into Italy to support the Duke and them, representing that while coming to defend his friends he might afterwards, being in the country, turn his thoughts to the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, for which enterprise they promised aid both in men and money. And thus, while war was being carried on, as I have related, in Tuscany and Lombardy, the envoy concluded an agreement with King René whereby he undertook to reach Italy some time in June with two thousand four hundred horsemen, receiving from the League on his arrival at Alessandria thirty thousand florins, and thereafter ten thousand a month while the war lasted. But when in fulfilment of this agreement King René sought to pass into Italy, he was stopped by the Duke of Savoy and the Marquis of Monferrat, who as friends of the Venetians refused him passage.

Whereupon René was advised by the Florentine envoy 1453.
that, to maintain the credit of his friends he should return to Provence, and come thence with some of his followers into Italy by sea; and meanwhile should get the King of France to obtain permission from the Duke of Savoy for the rest of the army to pass through his country. Which counsel was followed, King René coming into Italy by sea, while the rest of his forces were, out of complaisance to the French King, admitted into Savoy. King René was most honourably received by Duke Francesco; and the French and Italian forces, being combined, assailed the Venetians so vigorously that all the towns seized by them in the district of Cremona were speedily recovered. Following up this success, they overran almost the whole territory of Brescia, whereupon the Venetian army, unable to maintain itself longer in the open field, was forced to retire under the walls of that city. The season, however, being now advanced, the Duke thought it prudent to withdraw his soldiers into quarters, Piacenza being assigned to King René for his lodging. The winter of 1453 passed without active movement. On the advent of spring, when the Duke had counted 1454.
on taking the field and stripping the Venetians of their dominions on the mainland, word was sent him by King René that he was obliged to return to France. This intimation took the Duke completely by surprise, and consequently caused him extreme displeasure; but though he went at once to King René to dissuade him from going, neither prayers nor promises availed to alter his resolution. He consented, however, to leave part of his forces behind, and promised to send John his son to serve the League in his place. His departure was

1454. not unwelcome to the Florentines, who having recovered all their towns and strongholds stood no longer in fear of King Alfonso, and at the same time had no desire that the Duke should do more than regain his own possessions in Lombardy. René therefore went off, and sent, as he had promised, his son into Italy, who, however, made no long stay in Lombardy, but came thence to Florence where he was most honourably received.

§ 32. The departure of King René disposed the Duke to peace, which was no less desired by the Venetians, by Alfonso, and by the Florentines, all being alike exhausted by the war. The Pope, who had shown throughout how much he desired peace, was now urgent in promoting it. For in this very year Mahomet, the Grand Turk, had taken Constantinople, and made himself master of the whole of Greece, a conquest which filled all Christendom with dismay, but above others the Pope and the Venetians, to both of whom it seemed that already they heard in Italy the clang of the Turkish arms. The Pope therefore besought all the Italian potentates to send him envoys with powers to conclude a general peace. With this request all complied; but when the envoys met to settle terms, grave difficulties arose. The King claimed to be repaid by the Florentines the cost he had incurred in his war against them. The Florentines sought similar compensation for themselves. The Venetians called on the Duke to render up Cremona; while the Duke made a like demand on them for Bergamo, Brescia, and Crema. It seemed therefore as though these difficulties could never be adjusted. Neverthe-

less, what in Rome was found impossible among many, was easily effected between two at Venice and Milan. For while the negotiations for peace were still dragging on in Rome, a treaty was concluded between the Duke and the Venetians on the ninth day of April 1454, whereby each party resumed the towns it had possessed before the war, while the Duke was permitted to recover for himself the towns of which he had been despoiled by the Princes of Savoy and Monferrat. To the other powers of Italy a period of one month was allowed to ratify the treaty. The Pope and the Florentines, with the Sienese and other minor powers, ratified within the prescribed time; and a further compact was entered into between the Florentines, the Duke, and the Venetians for a truce to last for twenty-five years. With the treaty for a general peace King Alfonso alone of all the Italian Princes showed himself dissatisfied, considering it to be drawn in a form derogatory to his dignity, since he was included in it as a subordinate and not as a principal. For which reason he remained long in suspense, nor would allow his intentions to be known. However, after many solemn embassies had been sent him by the Pope and by other powers, he let himself be persuaded by them, by the Pope more especially, and with his son entered the League for a term of thirty years. Moreover, he and the Duke formed a twofold family alliance, each receiving for his son a daughter of the other in marriage. Nevertheless, that seeds of war might still survive in Italy, the King would not consent to make peace unless he had free leave from the other parties to the League (whom he pledged himself not to injure thereby), to make war on the Genoese, on Gismondo

1454.

1455.

1455. Malatesta, and on Astorre, Lord of Faenza. This being agreed to, his son Ferrando, who was then at Siena, returned to the Kingdom with no gain of territory from his invasion of Tuscany, and with great loss of men.

§ 33. This general peace being concluded, the only fear which remained was that King Alfonso, from his hostility to the Genoese, might disturb it. But things took a different turn, and the peace was broken, not by the King, but, as had often happened before, by the ambition of mercenary soldiers. On the declaration of peace, the Venetians had, as is their custom, discharged their Condottiere, Jacopo Piccinino, who being joined by other disbanded freelances, passed into Romagna and thence into the Sienese country, where he encamped, and making war on the inhabitants seized certain towns of the Sienese. At the beginning of these movements, early in the year 1455, Pope Nicholas died, and Callixtus III. was chosen to succeed him. To put a stop to a new and near war, this Pope forthwith got together as many soldiers as he could muster, and placing them under the command of Giovanni Ventimiglia, his Captain, sent them, along with the forces of the Florentines and of the Duke, who also had combined to repress these disturbances, against Jacopo. In a battle fought near Bolsena, though Ventimiglia was made prisoner, Jacopo was worsted, and retiring in great disorder to Castiglione della Pescaja, must have been utterly undone had he not been assisted with money by Alfonso. This succour made every one believe that Jacopo's movements had been prompted by the King; who, seeing himself found

out, in order to smooth things over with the other parties to the League, whom he had well-nigh estranged by this wretched war, induced Jacopo to restore to the Sienese, on their paying him twenty thousand florins, those towns of theirs which he had seized; this arranged, the King received Jacopo and his followers into the Kingdom. 1456.

While busied in devising means to crush Jacopo Piccinino, the Pope did not neglect preparations for the defence of Christianity, the overthrow whereof he saw threatened by the Turks, but sent forth into all Christian countries envoys and preachers to persuade Princes and Peoples to arm on behalf of their religion, and to support an enterprise against its common enemy both with their money and personal service. In Florence, accordingly, large sums were collected by way of alms, while many assumed the badge of the red cross in token of their willingness to serve in person in this crusade. Solemn processions were likewise made, so that nothing was lacking either publicly or privately to mark the desire of our citizens to be among the foremost with counsel, money, or men to support the enterprise. The crusading fever was, however, somewhat allayed when tidings came that while the Turk with his army were besieging Belgrade, a fortress of Hungary standing on the Danube, his army had been routed by the Hungarians, and he himself wounded. For the alarm felt by the Pope and the States of Christendom at the loss of Constantinople being thus quieted, their warlike preparations languished, and on the death of the Waywode John Hunniades, who had been Captain in this great victory, ceased altogether even in Hungary.

1456. § 34. To return to the affairs of Italy, I say that in the year 1456 the disturbances caused by Jacopo Piccinino ceased. But when men laid aside their weapons, it seemed as though God were minded to assume His, so tremendous was the tempest that then broke forth, causing in Tuscany effects unheard of before, and memorable to all who may hear of them hereafter. On the 24th August, an hour before day-break, a whirlwind of dense black vapour spreading for about two miles in all directions issued from the upper sea near Ancona, and traversing Italy passed into the lower sea near Pisa. This vapour driven by resistless forces, whether natural or supernatural I know not, and rent and riven in struggles with itself, split off into clouds which, now rising to heaven now descending to earth, dashed one against another, or whirling round with inconceivable velocity swept before them a wind of measureless violence, and sent forth as they strove together frequent lightnings and dazzling flames. From these clouds thus broken and embroiled, from this furious wind, and these quick-succeeding sheets of flame, came a sound louder than the roar of thunder or earthquake, and so terrible that whosoever heard it thought the end of the world was come, and that land and sea, and all that was left of earth or sky, were returning mingled together to ancient Chaos. Wherever this dreadful whirlwind passed it wrought the most astonishing and unheard-of effects, but more notably than elsewhere near the walled village of San Casciano, situated about eight miles from Florence, on the hill separating the Val di Pesa from the Val di Grieve. Between this town and the village of Sant' Andrea, standing on the same hill, the hurricane swept,

not touching Sant' Andrea, and merely grazing the 1456.
outskirts of San Casciano so as to strike some of the battlements of the walls, and the chimneys of a few houses. But outside, in the space between the two places named, many buildings were levelled with the ground; the roofs of the Churches of San Martino at Bagnuolo, and of Santa Maria della Pace, were borne bodily to a distance of more than a mile; and a carrier and his mules were found dead, some way from the road, in the neighbouring valley. The strongest oaks and all the sturdier trees which would not stoop before the fury of the blast, were not merely uprooted but carried far away from the places where they grew. When the tempest had passed and morning broke, men remained stunned and stupefied. They saw their fields devastated and destroyed, their houses and churches laid in ruins, and heard the lamentations of those who looked on shattered homesteads under which their kinsmen or their cattle lay dead. Which sights and sounds filled all who saw or heard of them with the profoundest pity and fear. But doubtless it was God's will rather to threaten than to chastise Tuscany; for had a hurricane like this, instead of coming among oaks, and alders, and thinly-scattered dwellings, burst upon the close-packed houses and crowded population of a great city, it would assuredly have wrought the most terrible ruin and destruction that the mind of man can conceive. But God willed that this slight sample should for the time suffice to revive among men the recognition of His power.

§ 35. To go back to the point where I diverged: King Alfonso, as I have said already, was dissatisfied

1456-1457. with the peace concluded, and seeing that the war which, without reasonable excuse, he had induced Jacopo Piccinino to move against the Sienese had produced no great results, he determined to try what results might follow on a campaign in which, by the terms of the League, he was warranted to engage. Wherefore in the year 1456 he carried war both by sea and land against the Genoese, designing to take the Government from the Fregosi who then ruled Genoa, and restore it to the Adorni. Simultaneously he sent Jacopo Piccinino across the Tronto against Gismondo Malatesta. Gismondo, who had put his towns in a state of good defence, made light of Jacopo's attack, so that in this direction the King's enterprise was fruitless. But the enterprise against Genoa brought on Alfonso and his Kingdom a greater war than he desired. Pietro Fregoso, who at this time was Doge of Genoa, fearing he might not be able to withstand the King's attack, decided to make a gift of what he could not himself hold to some one who could defend it against his enemies, and who, in return for so great a boon, might afterwards requite him with a suitable
1458. recompense. He therefore sent envoys to Charles VII. of France, offering him the Lordship of Genoa. Which offer Charles accepted, and sent King René's son, John of Anjou, who shortly before had left Florence and returned to France, to take over possession. For Charles bethought him that, as John had adopted many Italian customs, he might govern Genoa better than another. He also had it in his mind, that from Genoa John might arrange for invading Naples, of which Kingdom René, his father, had been despoiled by Alfonso. John accordingly went to Genoa where he

was received as its Prince, the fortresses of the city and of the entire territory being placed in his hands. 1458.

§ 36. This turn of affairs displeased Alfonso, who saw he had brought on himself too powerful a foe. Still he was not daunted, but went on resolutely with his enterprise, and had sent his fleet, under the command of Villamarina, to Portofino, when he was seized by a sudden illness and died. In consequence of his death, John and the Genoese escaped war; while Ferrando, who now succeeded to his father's throne, was filled with anxiety, both at the coming into Italy of an enemy of so great reputation, and because he distrusted the loyalty of many of his own barons, who, in their desire for change, he thought might side with France. He feared too that the Pope, whose ambition was well known to him, might attempt to deprive him of his Kingdom before he had time to establish himself securely. His only hope lay in the Duke of Milan, who was hardly less anxious than himself for the safety of the Kingdom, fearing that were the French to become its masters, their next step would be to seize on his Dukedom, which he knew they thought themselves entitled to claim as rightfully theirs. Wherefore, immediately on the death of Alfonso, the Duke sent letters and troops to Ferrando; the troops to succour him and support his credit, the letters bidding him be of good heart, and assuring him that he should not be abandoned in the hour of need.

On Alfonso's death it had been the Pope's desire to confer the Kingdom on his own nephew, Pietro Lodovico Borgia. To give a fair colour to this scheme, and obtain the concurrence of the other States of Italy, he

1458. publicly proclaimed that he desired to bring back the Kingdom under the authority of the Church. He tried accordingly to persuade the Duke not to lend any support to Ferrando, offering to secure for him the territories which formerly belonged to him in the Kingdom. But in the midst of these new schemes and intrigues Callixtus died, and was succeeded in the Pontificate by Pius II., by birth a Sienese of the family of the Piccolomini, and named Æneas. This Pope, looking only to the good of Christendom and the honour of the Church, and putting all personal considerations aside, at the instance of the Duke of Milan crowned Ferrando King of Naples; for he thought the dissensions of Italy might be sooner quieted by maintaining the ruler already in possession, than by favouring a French invader, or attempting, like Callixtus, to seize the Kingdom for himself. Ferrando, however, in return for these good offices, made Antonio, the Pope's nephew, Prince of Amalfi, and along with the title gave him one of his illegitimate daughters to wife. He also restored Benevento and Terracina to the Church.

1459. § 37. Arms in Italy being now, as it seemed, laid aside, the Pope, in prosecution of the plans laid by his predecessor, was arranging for a movement by united Christendom against the Turks, when a quarrel broke out between the Fregosi and John, Lord of Genoa, rekindling wars greater and more momentous than any before. To Pietrino Fregoso, who had retired to a stronghold of his own on the Genoese coast, it seemed that his services and those of his house, to which John of Anjou owed his great position, had not

been sufficiently requited. In consequence the two 1459.
came to an open breach. This rejoiced Ferrando as affording an admirable chance to secure his safety. He therefore supplied Pietrino with men and money, hoping through him to drive John from Genoa. Being informed of this, John sent to France for soldiers, with whom he encountered Pietrino. The latter, however, from the abundant aid afforded him, was now grown extremely strong, so that John had to shut himself up within the city. Obtaining entrance there by night, Pietrino seized some of the forts, but in the morning was met and slain by John's soldiers, and all his followers killed or made prisoners. This success encouraged John to proceed with his enterprise against the Kingdom. In October of 1459 he sailed from Genoa for Naples with a strong fleet, landing first at Baia, and afterwards at Sessa, where he was received by the Duke of that name. The Prince of Taranto, 1460.
the people of Aquila, with many other Lords and townships also sided with him, so that the Kingdom was well-nigh wrecked. Seeing this, Ferrando appealed for aid to the Pope and to the Duke, and that he might have fewer enemies to deal with came to an accord with Gismondo Malatesta, thereby so disgusting Jacopo Piccinino, the hereditary foe of Gismondo, that he threw up his engagement and took service with John. Ferrando likewise sent money to Federigo, Count of Urbino, and assembling as speedily as he could what in those days was thought a goodly army, came up with his enemy on the banks of the Sarno, when a battle ensued in which he was defeated and many of his chief captains made prisoners. After this overthrow, only the city of Naples, with a few of the Barons,

1460. and one or two fortresses remained faithful to Ferrando; the great body of the people declared for John, who was urged by Jacopo Piccinino to follow up his victory by a march on Naples, and so secure the capital of the Kingdom. But John refused, saying that he desired first to strip Naples of all her subject territories, and then to attack her; for he thought when all her territories were taken, the conquest of the city itself would be easy. It was to his adopting this perverse course, not knowing that the limbs more readily obey the head than the head the limbs, that the failure of his enterprise was due.

§ 38. After this defeat Ferrando sought refuge in Naples, where he received fugitives from all parts of his dominions, collected money in the least oppressive ways he could, and made some little head with his army. He again sent for aid to the Pope and the Duke, by both of whom he was succoured more promptly and more liberally than before, for they were in great alarm lest he should lose his kingdom. Thus reinforced, Ferrando came forth from Naples, and recovering credit, began also to recover some of his lost territories.

1461. While the war in the Kingdom went on, an event happened which greatly damaged the prestige of John of Anjou, and lessened his chance of ultimate success. The Genoese grew so disgusted with the insolent and oppressive rule of the French, that they rose against the royal Governor, compelling him to flee for safety into the citadel. In this rising both the Fregosi and the Adorni joined, and were supplied by the Duke of Milan with men and money both for the recovery of

the city and for its retention; so that when King René, 1461.
hoping to regain it with the aid of the Citadel, came with a fleet to support the interests of his son, in attempting to land his troops, he met with so thorough a defeat as forced him to return discredited to Provence. Tidings of this reverse reaching the Kingdom greatly disheartened John of Anjou, who nevertheless did not abandon his enterprise, but continued the war for some time longer, supported by those Barons whose rebellion left them no hope of Ferrando's forgiveness. At last, however, in the year 1463, after many shifts of Fortune, the armies of the rival Kings met in battle near Troja, 1462.
when John was defeated, yet suffered less from this defeat than from the desertion of Jacopo Piccinino, 1463.
who went over to Ferrando. Thus stripped of his forces John withdrew to Ischia, whence he afterwards returned to France. The war lasted four years, during which time John more than once had victory placed in his hands by the valour of his soldiers, but lost all by his own heedlessness.

So far as appeared, the Florentines had borne no part in this war. True it is, that through an embassy 1460.
sent them by King John of Aragon on his succession to that Kingdom on Alfonso's death, he called upon them to aid the cause of his nephew Ferrando, as they were bound to do by the League recently concluded with his father Alfonso. But to this the Florentines had replied that they had come under no such obligation to Alfonso, and were not going to help the son in a war which the father had brought upon himself by his own aggressions; and as the war had been begun without their knowledge or advice, so it should continue and end without their assistance or interference.

Whereupon the envoys after making solemn protest on behalf of their King of the penalty for breach of obligation, with interest on the loss it might occasion, departed in great wrath against Florence. The Florentines, therefore, during the course of the war remained at peace as regards foreign States, but were not at rest within their city, as shall particularly be shown in the Book following.

BOOK VII

§ 1. To those who shall have read the foregoing Book it may seem that, in what purports to be a History of Florentine affairs, events happening in Lombardy and in the Kingdom have been recorded by the writer at undue length. Nevertheless I have not sought, nor shall I seek hereafter, to avoid narratives of a like nature. That I never promised to write a History of Italy, seems to me no reason for not relating the most notable events occurring in that country; for were these not set forth, our own History would be at once less intelligible and less interesting, since it is from the actions of the other Peoples and Princes of Italy that the wars in which the Florentines are forced to take part commonly have their beginning. As, for instance, from the war between John of Anjou and King Ferrando there grew the rancorous hatred and hostility afterwards entertained by Ferrando against the Florentines, and more particularly against the family of the Medici. For the King complained that in that war, not only had he received no aid from Florence, but favour had been shown to his adversary. Which grievances of his, as will be seen in the course of this History, led to the gravest consequences.

But since in writing of foreign affairs I have run on to the year 1463, I must now go back for a period of several years in order to set forth troubles which hap-

pened at home during that time. Before doing so, however, I desire to offer, as my custom is, some remarks of a general character, and to say that those who expect a Republic to maintain itself in unity will very often find themselves mistaken. The truth is that while some divisions harm a Republic, others benefit it. Those that are attended by feuds and factions harm it; those benefit it which are not so accompanied. Consequently the founder of a Republic, though he cannot guard against enmities arising therein, must at least provide against the growth of factions. It should therefore be borne in mind that a citizen may acquire reputation in his city in two ways, by open methods or by covert. Reputation is acquired openly by winning battles, by taking towns, by conducting an embassy with zeal and discretion, by counselling the Republic wisely and successfully. Reputation is gained covertly by benefits conferred on individual citizens, in defending them against the Magistrates, assisting them with money, advancing them to undeserved preferment, or else by gratifying the populace with shows and largesses. This mode of acting breeds factions and partisans, and in proportion as the reputation thereby obtained is hurtful, the other reputation, standing clear of factions, is useful, as based on the public welfare, and not on advantages to individuals. And though there be no way to secure that, among the citizens by whom reputation is thus sought, there shall not prevail the bitterest animosities, nevertheless, being without partisans who follow them out of selfish motives, they can do no hurt to the commonwealth—nay, must needs do it good, since to succeed in their aims they will labour for its advancement, and keep strict watch

on one another to see that constitutional limits are not departed from.

The divisions of Florence have always been accompanied by factions, and consequently have always been hurtful; nor has any victorious faction ever remained united save while the faction opposed to it was still vigorous and active. But whenever opposition has been extinguished, the prevailing faction being no longer restrained by any fear, and having no controlling principle within itself to bind it, has at once split up. In the year 1434 the party of Cosimo de' Medici got the upper hand, yet, inasmuch as the defeated party from having many and powerful friends, was still extremely strong, the Medicean faction, through fear of its adversaries, remained for a time united and moderate, so that, as between themselves, its supporters made no false move, nor gave cause by indiscreet conduct for the people to hate them. Accordingly, whenever the Government required the consent of the people to renew its powers, it always found them ready to concede to its chiefs the authority asked for, and in this way between 1434 and 1455, a period of twenty-one years, its authority was six times renewed by a *Balía* constitutionally granted through the Councils.

§ 2. There were then in Florence, as I have repeatedly mentioned, two most powerful citizens, Cosimo de' Medici and Neri Capponi, the latter of whom, since he was one of those who acquire reputation by public services, had many friends but few partisans. Cosimo, on the other hand, availing himself both of open and covert paths to power, besides having many friends had also many partisans, who holding together while

both Cosimo and Neri were yet living, inasmuch as they used their authority graciously, always readily obtained what they desired from the people. But in the year 1455, Neri being dead and the adverse party extinct, the Government found difficulty in getting their authority renewed. For this the friends of Cosimo, and those of them who had most to say in the conduct of public affairs, were themselves to blame; for there being no longer any opposed party to overawe them, their great aim was to lessen the supremacy of their chief. It was this humour that gave a beginning to the divisions which followed afterwards in the year 1466, when those who carried on the Government recommended in the Councils, wherein the Public Administration was being openly discussed, that they should not seek to renew the power of the *Balìa*, but should lock up the ballot bags and draw the Magistrates by lot, in accordance with the method followed in former *Scrutinies*.

To check this humour Cosimo had to choose between two alternatives: either with the help of those of his partisans who still stood by him, and by the overthrow of the others, to resume the reins of Government by force; or else to let things take their course, and allow his friends to learn by experience that it was not him but themselves they were depriving of power and reputation. Of which two alternatives he chose the second, well knowing that under the proposed method of governing, inasmuch as the ballot bags were filled with the names of his own supporters, he incurred no danger, and might when he liked get the Government again into his hands.

The city having thus recovered power to appoint its

Magistrates by lot, it seemed to the community at large that they had regained their freedom, and the Magistrates no longer decided cases at the will of powerful citizens, but in accordance with their own convictions, so that the friend now of one powerful man, now of another, was cast; and those citizens who had been accustomed to see their houses filled with suitors and with gifts, now saw them emptied of both, and themselves reduced to an equality with persons whom they had been used to look on as far beneath them, while others who had formerly been their equals now became their superiors. Instead of being reverenced and honoured, they were often jeered and derided, both they and the Government being spoken of in the streets and public resorts without the least reserve. In this way they soon came to see that it was they and not Cosimo who had lost authority. All which Cosimo feigned not to notice; but when any measure came up for discussion which he saw would be agreeable to the people, he was foremost in promoting it. But 1458.
what gave the great folk most alarm, and afforded Cosimo better occasion to make himself felt, was the revival of the system of assessment (*catasto*) of the year 1427, under which the amount to be paid was fixed by law, and not at the discretion of the taxing officers.

§ 3. On this ordinance being proposed and passed, and the Magistracy for carrying it out appointed, the great families with one accord came and implored Cosimo to extricate them and himself from the hands of the Plebeians, and restore to the Government that credit which made him powerful and them respected. To whom Cosimo replied that he would willingly do

1458. so, provided a measure to that effect were passed in due form, with the consent of the people, and not by violence, for to any proposal of that nature he would not listen. An attempt was then made in the Councils to obtain sanction for a new *Balía*, but without success. Whereupon the wealthy citizens returned to Cosimo and in very humble terms besought him to convoke a General Assembly of the People (*Parlamento*). But with this request of theirs Cosimo, who desired to bring them to such straits as would clearly teach them their mistake, absolutely refused to comply. And when Donato Cocchi, who happened to be Gonfalonier of Justice, proposed to call a *Parlamento* without his leave, Cosimo contrived that he should be so ridiculed by his colleagues in the Signory, that he lost his head and was sent home as one demented. Nevertheless, since it is never safe to let things reach such a pass that you cannot, though you desired it, afterwards check them, when Luca Pitti, a daring and high-spirited citizen, was made Gonfalonier of Justice, Cosimo thought it expedient to leave the matter to be dealt with by him, so that if blame were incurred in the attempt it might rest on Luca and not on himself. Luca accordingly at the beginning of his term of office repeatedly proposed to the people to renew the *Balía*, and, not obtaining their consent, threatened those who sat with him in the Councils in haughty and abusive words, which he presently converted into deeds. For on the eve of St. Lawrence, in August 1458, after filling the Palace with armed men, he summoned the people into the Piazza, and violently and by force of arms compelled them to do what they would not

consent to do of their own free will. A *Balía* having 1458.
thus been created, the authority of the Government re-established, and the Chief Magistrates appointed at the pleasure of a few, these, in order to confirm by fear the Government they had set up by force, sent Messer Girolamo Machiavelli with certain others into banishment, and deprived many more of their civil rights. Not having confined himself within the limits of the exile assigned him, Messer Girolamo was afterwards declared an outlaw. He then roved about Italy stirring up its Princes against his native city. Betrayed by one of those Lords, he was arrested in the territory of Lunigiana, and being carried to Florence was put to 1460.
death in prison.

§ 4. During the eight years it lasted, this Government was marked by violence and oppression. For Cosimo, now an old man worn out and enfeebled by bodily infirmities, being unable as formerly to take an active part in public business, the city became a prey to a few of her citizens. Luca Pitti, as a reward for his 1463.
signal services to the Republic, was made a knight; in return for which mark of favour, and not to be outdone in showing gratitude, he passed a decree whereby the members of the Signory, who before had been styled Priors of the Arts, that they might enjoy the name at least of a possession they had lost, were to be styled Priors of Liberty. He also ordained that the Gonfalonier of Justice, who formerly sat at the right hand of the Rectors, should henceforth sit between them. And that God might be seen to have a share in these changes, Luca caused public processions to be made and solemn services performed in thanksgiving for this

restitution of honours. Rich presents were bestowed on Messer Luca by the Signory and by Cosimo, whose example was emulated by the entire community, it being generally believed that the value of these gifts was not less than twenty thousand ducats. Whereby he rose to such reputation that he, and no longer Cosimo, was thought to be the ruler of the city. In consequence he grew so presumptuous that he began to build himself two houses, one in Florence, the other at Ruciano, about a mile from the town, both of them splendid and regal, and the one within the city larger in every respect than any which up to that time had been built by a private citizen. For the completion of these edifices he scrupled not to use means before unheard of. For not only did fellow-citizens and private friends contribute money, and supply him with the materials needed, but public corporations and entire townships lent their aid. Moreover, any man who was an outlaw, or who had committed murder, theft, or other offence for which he feared public punishment, provided he were serviceable on these works, found safe refuge within their walls. Other citizens, if they did not build like Luca, were no less violent and grasping than he; and thus Florence, having now no foreign war to ruin her, was ruined by her sons.

It was at this time that the wars in the Kingdom of Naples, of which I have spoken, were waged, as well as certain others in Romagna undertaken by the Pope against the family of the Malatesti, whom he sought to deprive of Rimini and Cesena of which they were in possession. In which enterprises, and in schemes for an expedition against the Turk, Pope Pius spent his Pontificate.

§ 5. But Florence continued in her civil feuds and troubles. The divisions which, from the causes above mentioned, began in the party of Cosimo in the year 1455, were, as I have said, for a time tempered by his prudence. But in the year 1464 his malady, returning 1464. in an acute form, put an end to his life. Friends and foes alike lamented his loss. Those who for political reasons did not love him, remembering how rapacious his partisans had been even while he lived, and while respect for him rendered them less insupportable, feared to be utterly ruined and crushed by them now that he was gone. In Piero, his son, they put little trust; for, though a worthy man, they thought that as he too was sickly, and besides was new to public life, he would be constrained to deal tenderly with his supporters, who being under no control would grow still more outrageous in their rapacity. His death, therefore, was greatly mourned by all.

For one who did not rest on armed support, Cosimo was the greatest and most famous citizen whom, not Florence only, but any city of which we have record ever had, excelling all of his time not merely in authority and wealth, but also in bounty and prudence; for among the qualities which made him the first man of his city was this, of surpassing all others in generosity and munificence. His generosity was better seen after his death, when Piero his son sought to realise his estate; for there was no one of any importance in the city to whom Cosimo had not advanced large sums of money. Frequently too, when he knew a man of good standing to be in difficulties, he would come unasked to his relief. His munificence was shown in the many buildings he erected. For the convents and

churches of San Marco and San Lorenzo, the monastery of Santa Verdiana in Florence, the monastery of San Girolamo and the Badia on the hill of Fiesole, and also a convent of the minor Friars in the Mugello, were not merely endowed, but were built by him from their very foundations. Moreover, in the churches of Santa Croce, of the Servi, of the Angioli, and of San Miniato he caused the most splendid altars and chapels to be erected. And not only did he build these churches and chapels, but supplied them with suitable furniture, and with all else needed for the seemliness of divine worship. In addition to which sacred edifices must be mentioned his private dwellings, one within the city of a grandeur suited to so great a citizen, and four in the country, at Careggi, Fiesole, Cafaggiuolo, and Trebbio, each of them more like a royal palace than the residence of a private citizen. Nor was it enough for him to be known for the magnificence of his buildings in Italy alone; in Jerusalem he erected an hospital for sick and poor pilgrims.

On the construction of which various edifices he spent vast sums of money; but though these and all his other works and doings were of a princely character, and though he possessed absolute authority in Florence, so completely was he guided by prudence as never to depart from the simplicity of Republican manners, but in his conversation, retinue, equipages, in his whole style of living, and in the marriages he made for his family, differed in nothing from any ordinary citizen. For he knew that things out of the common course, when seen and obtruded on the eye at every turn, arouse far more envy than when cloaked under a plain exterior. Wherefore, when he had to find wives for

his sons, he sought no alliances with Princes, but wedded Giovanni to Cornelia of the Alessandri, and Piero to Lucrezia of the Tornabuoni; while of his granddaughters by Piero, he married Bianca to Guglielmo of the Pazzi, and Nannina to Bernardo Rucellai. Of all the rulers of his time, whether Princes or heads of Commonwealths, none equalled him in sagacity; whence it came that in great vicissitudes of fortune, in a city so unstable, and among so fickle a people, he retained the Government for one and thirty years. For from his singular foresight he recognised dangers at a distance, and so had time either to check their growth, or to make such provision against them that when grown they should do no harm. In this way he not only overcame all domestic and civil rivalry, but also conducted affairs with many foreign Princes so prudently and successfully, that all who entered into league with him and his country came off either equal or superior to their enemies, while any who opposed him, if they saved their dominions, lost both time and money. Whereof the Venetians afford an excellent example; for with him on their side they always got the better of Duke Filippo, whereas without him they were always worsted, first by Filippo, and afterwards by Francesco Sforza. And again when they leagued with King Alfonso against the Florentine Republic, Cosimo used his credit in such a way as to drain both Naples and Venice of money, so that they were forced to accept peace on any terms he chose to offer. Of the difficulties, therefore, against which Cosimo had to contend both within the city and without, the issue was invariably glorious for himself and disastrous for his foes, for while civil discords always strengthened

his authority in Florence, foreign wars increased his influence and reputation abroad. This enabled him to add Borgo San Sepolcro, Montedoglio, the Casentino, and the Val di Bagno to the territories of the Republic; and thus by his ability and good fortune he quelled all his enemies and exalted his friends.

§ 6. He was born in 1389 on the Day of Saints Cosimo and Damiano. His early life was involved in many troubles, as instanced in his imprisonment, exile, and danger of death. From the Council of Constance, to which he had gone with Pope John, he had, upon the downfall of that Pontiff, to flee in disguise in order to save his life. But after passing his fortieth year he lived most happily, so that not only those who took part with him in public enterprises, but those also who administered his private affairs throughout the different countries of Europe, shared in his prosperity. Whereby many Florentine families acquired immense wealth, as was the case with the Tornabuoni, the Benci, the Portinari, and the Sassetti, while in a less degree all such others as were dependent on his counsel or good fortune were similarly enriched. So that although he was continually spending money in building churches and bestowing alms, he would sometimes lament to his friends that he had never been able to spend so much in God's honour as to leave a balance against Him in his books. He was of middle height, of an olive complexion, and a dignified presence. Though not learned he was most eloquent, and abounded in natural shrewdness; he was full of good offices towards his friends, charitable to the poor, instructive in his conversation, cautious in planning, prompt in executing, pungent

and weighty in his sayings and rejoinders. When Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi was in banishment, he sent word to Cosimo that *the hen was hatching*; to which Cosimo answered that *she could not well hatch out of her nest.* To other exiles who sent him word that *they were not sleeping*, he replied that *he could well believe it, since he had spoilt their slumbers.* When Pope Pius was inciting the Princes of Christendom to a crusade against the Turk, Cosimo said of him that *he was an old man engaging in a young man's enterprise.* When the Venetian envoys came to Florence with those of King Alfonso to make complaint of the Republic, he showed them his uncovered head and asked them what was its colour, and when they answered that it was white, he rejoined, *before very long the heads of your senators will be white as mine.* A few hours before his death his wife asked him why he kept his eyes closed; he replied, *to accustom them.* Being told by certain citizens after his return from exile that he was ruining the city, and sinning against God in driving out so many worthy citizens, he answered, *better a city ruined than a city lost; a worthy citizen can be made with four ells of scarlet cloth; and States cannot be held by the man who is always telling his beads.* Sayings like these gave occasion to his enemies to speak ill of him, as one who loved himself more than his country, and this world better than the next. Many other sayings of his might be recorded, but I omit them as unnecessary. He was the friend and patron of men of letters, and for that reason brought to Florence the famous Argyropoulos, a Greek by birth, and the most learned scholar of his time, that he might impart the Greek tongue, with all his

other stores of knowledge, to the youth of Florence. He also brought up in his own house Marsilio Ficino, the second father of the Platonic Philosophy, to whom he was warmly attached, and on whom he bestowed a villa near his own at Careggi, where he could pursue his literary studies undisturbed, and yet be at hand when wanted by his patron.

His prudence, therefore, his wealth, his mode of life, and his good fortune made him feared and loved by the citizens of Florence, and held in marvellous esteem by the Princes not only of Italy but of all Europe. In this way he left such a foundation for his posterity that, while they equalled him in worth, in their fortunes they far surpassed him, and deservedly obtained the same authority which he had exercised in Florence, not only in that city but throughout Christendom. Nevertheless, in the closing years of his life he suffered severe afflictions. For of his two sons Piero and Giovanni, the latter, on whom he most relied, died, while the other was of a sickly habit of body, and from his ailments little fitted for public or private business. Wherefore when Cosimo, after the death of his son Giovanni, had himself carried through his palace, he sighed and said, *this is too big a house for so small a family*. It also vexed his lofty spirit that he could not claim to have extended the Florentine dominion by any notable conquest; which grieved him the more because he thought that in this he had been deceived by Francesco Sforza, who, when only a Count, had promised him that, whenever he became Lord of Milan, he would undertake an expedition against Lucca on behalf of the Florentines, a promise which he never fulfilled. For with the change of his fortunes Sforza

changed his views, and on becoming Duke desired to enjoy in peace the dominions he had acquired by war, and therefore declined to gratify either Cosimo or any other by engaging in new enterprises; nor from the time he became Duke did he take part in any war except when compelled for his own defence. All this sorely vexed Cosimo, who saw that he had put himself to much trouble and expense in aggrandising a man who had proved faithless and ungrateful. He found, moreover, that owing to bodily infirmities he could no longer take the active part he had formerly taken in public and private business, and that in consequence both were ill-managed, the city being ruined by its citizens, and his substance wasted by his servants and kinsmen. All which circumstances disturbed the closing years of his life. He died, nevertheless, with the greatest name and fame. At home all the leading citizens, and abroad all Christian Princes, condoled with his son Piero on his death. He was attended to his grave with solemn pomp by his fellow-countrymen, and buried in the Church of San Lorenzo, where by public decree the words PATER PATRIÆ were inscribed on his tomb.

If, in recording the things done by Cosimo, I seem to have followed the style of those who write the lives of Princes rather than that of the general Historian, none should marvel; for as he was a man singular in our city, I have been constrained to praise him in an unusual way.

§ 7. While Florence and Italy were in the condition I have noted, a most formidable war against Louis, King of France, was begun by his Barons, aided by 1464.

1464. Francis, Duke of Brittany, and Charles, Duke of Burgundy. So serious was this war that it not only prevented King Louis from supporting Duke John of Anjou in his enterprises against Genoa and the Kingdom of Naples, but even induced him, seeing that he himself stood in need of any support he could get, to cede the Lordship of Savona, which city still remained in the hands of the French, to Francesco, Duke of Milan, intimating to him that if he pleased he might with free consent turn his arms against Genoa. This offer Francesco accepted, and through the reputation he derived from the friendship of the French King, and the support given him by the Adorni, succeeded in making himself Lord of Genoa, whereupon, not to show himself ungrateful for benefits received, he sent into France to the King's assistance fifteen hundred horsemen under the command of his eldest son Galeazzo.

Ferrando of Aragon and Francesco Sforza now remaining, the one King of the entire realm of Naples, the other Duke of Lombardy and Lord of Genoa, and both bound to one another by family alliances, cast about how to strengthen their States so as to enjoy them in security while they lived, and on their death leave them as they liked to their heirs. Accordingly they decided that the King must make sure work with those Barons who had gone against him in his war with John of Anjou, while the Duke should endeavour to rid himself of the following of the Bracceschi, the hereditary enemies of his family, who under Jacopo Piccinino had achieved the highest reputation. For Jacopo was now the foremost Captain in Italy, and having no Lordship of his own, was formidable to any who had, but most of all to the Duke; who, judging from what happened in his

own case, thought that while Jacopo lived he could 1464.
neither be safe himself, nor leave a secure inheritance to his children. Ferrando, therefore, spared no effort to come to terms with his Barons, using every art to this end, and with complete success. For these Lords saw that their ruin was certain if they stood out in arms against the King, whereas, in trusting him and coming to an accord, there was room for hope. And as men will always flee the evils that are certain, it follows that Princes can easily beguile those less powerful than themselves. The Barons perceiving the manifest peril of remaining at war, trusted to the peace offered them by the King, and throwing themselves into his arms, were afterwards in divers ways and on divers pretexts made away with. Alarmed by their fate, Jacopo Piccinino, who was then with his troops at Sulmona, in order that the King might have no opportunity to crush him, made overtures through his friends for a reconciliation with Duke Francesco, and on the Duke making him most liberal offers, decided to place himself in his hands, and went attended by a hundred horsemen to meet him at Milan.

§ 8. Under his father, and along with his brother, Jacopo had served for a great while, first the Duke Filippo, and afterwards the people of Milan, so that from long intercourse, as well as from the general goodwill, which the existing state of affairs helped to augment, he had many friends in that city. For the prosperous fortunes of the Sforzeschi and their present power had brought on them much envy, while Jacopo's ill-luck and long absence moved the people to pity him, and inspired them with a great longing to see

1464. him. These feelings were shown on his arrival, for there were very few of the nobility who did not go forth to meet him; the streets through which he passed were thronged with those who desired to look on him, and the family name was shouted everywhere. These popular honours hastened his ruin, since they increased the suspicions of the Duke, and consequently his anxiety to be rid of him. To effect this covertly, he caused the wedding of his natural daughter Drusiana with Jacopo, to whom she had been betrothed some time before, to be celebrated. He then made an arrangement with Ferrando to take Jacopo into his service with the title of Captain of his forces, and an allowance of a hundred thousand florins. When this
1465. had been settled, Jacopo, accompanied by his wife Drusiana and by a Ducal envoy, repaired to Naples, where he was joyfully and honourably welcomed, and for many days entertained with every kind of festivity. But on asking leave to proceed to Sulmona, where his followers were quartered, he was bidden by the King to a banquet in the castle, and when the banquet was over, was with his son Francesco thrown into prison, and soon after put to death. Thus our Italian Princes, dreading in others the valour which they did not themselves possess, strove to quench it; till, none being left, the country was laid open to the ruin which, not long after, overtook it.

1464. § 9. Meanwhile Pope Pius had arranged matters in Romagna, and seeing that general peace prevailed, thought it a favourable opportunity for a movement of Christendom against the Turk, and renewed all the measures devised by his predecessors with this object.

All the Christian Princes promised either men or money, while Matthias, King of Hungary, and Charles, Duke of Burgundy, further engaged to join in person, and were appointed by the Pope to be leaders of the expedition. And so far was the Pontiff led onwards by his hopes as to quit Rome and repair to Ancona, where it had been fixed that the united army should assemble, and whither the Venetians had undertaken to send ships to transport it to Slavonia. But after the Pope's arrival in Ancona so great a multitude gathered there, that in a few days the provisions that were in the town, or could be obtained from the country round about, fell short, so that all were like to die of famine. Besides, no money was forthcoming to give to those who needed it, nor arms to supply those who were without them. Neither Charles nor Matthias appeared, and the Venetians sent only one of their captains with a few galleys, more to make a show, and enable them to say they had kept faith, than with any intention of transporting the army. In the midst of these anxieties and disappointments the Pope, who was old and infirm, died, whereupon every one returned home. On the death of Pope Pius, which took place in the year 1465, Paul II., by birth a Venetian, was chosen to succeed him, and, as though it were fated that almost all the States of Italy should change their rulers about the same time, Francesco Sforza, who had held the Duke-dom of Milan for sixteen years, died in the following year, when Galeazzo, his son, was declared his successor. 1464. 1466.

§ 10. The death of this Prince caused the dissensions in Florence to grow still more violent and bring about their effects sooner. When Cosimo de' Medici died,

1464-1465. Piero, his son, left heir to his father's substance and position, sent for Messer Diotisalvi Neroni, a man of great authority and the highest repute among his fellow-citizens, in whom Cosimo himself had placed such trust that on his deathbed he charged Piero to regulate both his private affairs and his public conduct by his advice. Piero, therefore, made known to Messer Diotisalvi the confidence which Cosimo had reposed in him, and told him that, wishing to obey his father after death as he had in his life-time, he desired to consult with him both as to his patrimony and in the government of the city. And to begin with his private affairs, he would cause a statement of all his business transactions to be made out and given him, so that he might see exactly how matters stood, and prudently counsel him accordingly. Messer Diotisalvi promised to use all diligence and fidelity; but when he received and carefully went into the accounts, he saw that everywhere there was serious disorder. And being more moved by selfish ambition than by gratitude for the benefits he had received from Cosimo, or by love of his son, it struck him that it would be easy to destroy Piero's credit, and strip him of the authority his father had left him as an inheritance. Whereupon Messer Diotisalvi came to Piero with advice which, though it seemed perfectly honest and reasonable, in truth involved his ruin. He showed him the disorder of his affairs, and what provision he must make to escape loss of credit and standing, public as well as private; telling him that the most honourable way out of his difficulties was to try to realise all the many debts due to his father both by foreigners and by fellow-citizens. For with a view to gain partisans in

Florence and friends abroad, Cosimo had been so 1465.
generous in allowing all to share his prosperity that the money owing to him in respect of these advances amounted to no trifling sum. To Piero, who desired to put his affairs in order with his own means, this seemed good and upright advice; but no sooner had he given directions for the money to be called in than the citizens resented it, as though, instead of seeking his own, he were trying to take what was theirs, and began to speak of him disrespectfully, accusing him of avarice and ingratitude.

§ 11. Noting the universal disfavour which Piero 1466.
had incurred by following his advice, Messer Diotisalvi now associated with himself Messer Luca Pitti, Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli, and Niccolò Soderini in a conspiracy to deprive Piero of his credit and authority. These three were actuated by different motives. Messer Luca aspired to take the place of Cosimo, and was now grown so great a man that he disdained to pay court to Piero. Knowing Messer Luca to be unfit to be the head of the Government, Messer Diotisalvi thought that were Piero once out of the way, the management of everything must soon devolve upon himself. Niccolò Soderini's sole desire was that the city should enjoy greater freedom, and be governed by its Magistrates acting uncontrolled. Messer Agnolo had a special grudge against the Medici. Some time before, his son Raffaello had taken to wife Alessandra de' Bardi, receiving with her a great dower; but whether owing to her own misconduct, or to the fault of others, the lady was harshly treated by her husband and by her father-in-law. Whereupon her kinsman

1466. Lorenzo, son of Ilarione, moved to pity for the young wife, came by night with a company of armed men, and carried her off from Messer Agnolo's house. The Acciaiuoli complained of the insult thus done them by the Bardi, and the matter was referred to Cosimo, who decided that the Acciaiuoli should restore her dower to Alessandra, and that it must be left to her to say whether or not she would return to her husband. It seemed to Messer Agnolo that in thus deciding Cosimo had not treated him as a friend, and not having been able to revenge himself against Cosimo, he now resolved to be revenged on his son. Though animated by this diversity of motives, the conspirators all agreed in putting forward publicly the same ground for their action, declaring it to be their desire that the city should be governed by its Magistrates, and not by a close Council. The hatred felt against Piero, and the other incitements to attack him, were aggravated at this time by the bankruptcy of many merchants; for which Piero was universally blamed, it being said that his unexpected call to have his money returned had caused these men to break, to the great hurt and discredit of the city. A further ground of offence was that he was in treaty to obtain Clarice of the Orsini as wife for his eldest son Lorenzo, thereby affording to all more matter for reproach, it being said that in declining a Florentine connection for his son, he showed plainly that he was no longer content to be a simple citizen in his native city, but was preparing to seize upon it as a despot; since he who would not have his fellow-citizens for connections must desire to have them for slaves, and at any rate could not have them for friends.

To the chiefs of the conspiracy it now seemed that they had victory in their hands, inasmuch as they were followed by a majority of the citizens, deluded by that name of *Liberty* which, to credit their cause, they had assumed for their standard. 1466.

§ 12. While these humours were fermenting throughout the city, certain citizens, to whom civil strife was odious, resolved to try whether it might not be checked by some new kind of amusement, knowing that men who have nothing else to engage their thoughts often become the tools of those who seek to bring about change. To supply this want of occupation, and give the people something to think of which might turn their minds from questions of State, it being now a year from the death of Cosimo, these citizens, on the plea that the city needed to be cheered up, took occasion to devise two pageants more splendid than any ever before witnessed in Florence. One of these represented the coming of the three wise Kings from the East, guided by the star which revealed the nativity of Christ. This was shown with so much pomp and magnificence that in its preparation and celebration the whole city was kept busy for many months. The other display was a tournament (the name given to a spectacle representing a combat of knights on horseback), wherein the flower of the Florentine youth tilted with the most famous cavaliers of Italy. Among the young Florentine nobles Lorenzo, Piero's eldest son, distinguished himself most, carrying off, not by way of favour, but by his own valour and skill in arms, the highest honours. When, however, these shows were ended, the citizens reverted to the same thoughts as

1466. before, each following out his own ideas with more passion than ever. Whence arose violent quarrels and disturbances which were greatly heightened by two occurrences. One of these was the expiry of the authority of the *Balía*; the other the death of Francesco, Duke of Milan. On the occasion of this last event, Galeazzo, the new Duke, sent envoys to Florence to obtain a renewal of the covenants which his father Francesco had entered into with our city, whereby, among other matters, it was agreed that he should be paid a certain sum yearly. On this demand being presented, the leading citizens hostile to the Medici withstood it openly in the Councils, pointing out that their covenant was not with Galeazzo, but with Francesco, on whose death the obligation lapsed; nor was there any reason to renew it, for as Galeazzo was far inferior to his father in valour, they should not, and could not, look to him for the same advantages. If they got little help from the father, from the son they would have less; while if there were any citizen who, with a view to strengthen his own power, desired to secure Galeazzo's services, such a course was opposed to the institutions and to the freedom of the city. Piero, on the other hand, declared that it was unwise through mere parsimony to lose so necessary a friendship, and that nothing would so promote the welfare of the Republic and of the whole of Italy as to keep on good terms with the new Duke. For on seeing them thus united the Venetians could never hope to overthrow the Dukedom either by feigned friendship or by open war, whereas were they to hear that the Florentines and the Duke were estranged, they would at once take up arms, and finding him young, new in place, and

without friends, might easily get the better of him 1466.
whether by craft or force, and in either case the ruin of the Florentine Republic might be looked for.

§ 13. Piero's words and arguments were disregarded, and the hostility of the rival factions began to be more openly shown, each assembling by night in separate companies, the friends of the Medici meeting in the Crocetta, their opponents in the Pietà. The latter, in their eagerness for Piero's overthrow, had induced many citizens to sign their names as favouring their designs. At one of their many nightly meetings they particularly considered their plan of action, for while all were agreed that the power of the Medici must be diminished, they differed as to the mode in which this was to be done. The more reasonable and sober among them were of opinion that since the authority of the *Balía* had expired, they should confine themselves to opposing its renewal. By this means the government of the city by the Councils and the Magistrates would be restored, and the authority of Piero in a short time extinguished. With the loss of his public credit and standing, his credit as a merchant would be destroyed, for his affairs were so involved that if they resolutely resisted his using public money his bankruptcy was inevitable. When that took place he would no longer be formidable, and freedom, as every good citizen should desire, would be secured without banishments or bloodshed. But were they to attempt to use force they might incur many dangers, for we let the man fall who falls of himself, but run to his assistance when we see him knocked down by others. Moreover, if they took no violent measures

1466. against him, Piero would have no pretext for resorting to arms or for seeking alliances; or, if he did, would incur so much obloquy, and make himself so distrusted, that his overthrow would become still easier, and better occasion be given for his enemies to attack him.

Many others of those assembled were dissatisfied with this slow way of proceeding, declaring that delay would be much more for Piero's advantage than for their own; since, if they adhered to ordinary methods, he would run no risks whatever, while they must incur many. For even those Magistrates who were his enemies would permit him to remain in the city, and those who were his friends would, as happened in the year '58, make him their Lord by the overthrow of his opponents. If the counsels they had just listened to were those of good men, those now given were the counsels of wise men. It behoved them, therefore, to make an end of Piero while men's minds were kindled against him, and the plan for them to follow was to take arms within the city, and at the same time secure the services of the Marquis of Ferrara, so as to prevent their being disarmed from without; they would thus be ready whenever they found a friendly Signory to turn it to account. Finally it was agreed to await the creation of the new Signory, and be guided accordingly.

Among the conspirators was a certain Ser Niccolò Fedini, who had acted as their secretary, but who now, attracted by surer hopes, disclosed to Piero all the plots that were being hatched against him by his enemies, laying before him a list of the conspirators and of those who had signed their names. Piero was dismayed on seeing the number and quality of the citizens who had combined against him, but after

advising with his friends, resolved that he too should have a list signed by those who took his side, and this business being entrusted to one in whom he entirely confided, such instability and fickleness were found to prevail in the minds of the citizens, that many who had signed against him now signed for him.

§ 14. While things were in this disorder, the time arrived for renewing the Chief Magistracy, by which Niccolò Soderini was chosen Gonfalonier of Justice. 1465. It was astonishing to see how great a concourse not only of citizens of distinction but also of the common people attended him to the Palace. As he passed on his way an olive wreath was placed on his head to signify that on him depended the safety and liberty of his country. From his case, and from many other instances, it may be learned that on entering upon a Magistracy or Princedom a very high reputation is not to be desired, for, since it is impossible to act up to it or fulfil all the great things expected, it brings in time disgrace and contempt. Niccolò and Messer Tommaso Soderini were brothers. Niccolò had a higher spirit and greater courage, Tommaso was the more prudent. The latter, who was extremely well affected towards Piero, knowing his brother's views and that his sole desire was that the city should be free, and the Government strengthened and put on a sound footing without offence to any, exhorted him to prepare a new Scrutiny (*Squittino*), whereby the ballot-bags (*borse*) might be filled with the names of citizens who shared his opinions. This done, he might proceed to re-establish and secure the government without tumult or violence. Niccolò readily followed his brother's

1465. advice, and in the like futile efforts continued to waste the whole term of his Magistracy, being suffered to do so by his friends the other chiefs of the conspiracy, who, through jealousy, had no desire that the government should be reformed at his hands, and felt sure they could always effect the same results under another Gonfalonier. At last his Magistracy expired, and Niccolò, who had made many beginnings but had accomplished nothing, left office more discredited than he had been honoured on assuming it.

1466. § 15. This encouraged Piero's party, since it confirmed his friends in their hopes, and induced many who had hitherto stood neutral to adopt his cause, so that both sides being now balanced, many months were permitted to pass without further disturbance. Nevertheless, the party of Piero was continually gaining strength, which his enemies perceiving, consulted together, and resolved to effect by violence what they had not chosen, or had not known how to accomplish constitutionally through the Magistrates. They therefore decided that Piero, who then lay ill at Careggi, must be murdered, with which object the Marquis of Ferrara and his troops should be brought near the city, and on Piero's death come armed into the Piazza and force the Signory to establish a Government in accordance with their wishes; for although the whole body of the Signory was not favourable to them, they hoped to frighten such as were opposed into compliance. The better to cloak these designs Messer Diotisalvi paid Piero frequent visits, on which occasions he discoursed concerning the union of the city and tendered his advice. All the practices of the

conspirators had been revealed to Piero, who was 1466.
further informed by Domenico Martelli that Francesco Neroni, brother to Diotisalvi, had solicited him to join their party, assuring him that the game was in their hands and success certain. Whereupon Piero, taking occasion from the secret dealings of his enemies with the Marquis of Ferrara, resolved to be the first to arm. Accordingly he pretended to have received a letter from Messer Giovanni Bentivoglio, Lord of Bologna, notifying that the Marquis of Ferrara had arrived with troops at Fiumalbo, and that it was publicly said that he was on his way to Florence. In consequence of this intelligence Piero took arms, and attended by a great multitude of armed followers came to Florence. On his arrival all who were of his party likewise armed. The adverse faction did the like, but Piero's was the better ordered as being already prepared, while the other had as yet no settled plan of action. Messer Diotisalvi, whose house lay near Piero's, thinking he was not safe there, was continually running hither and thither, now to the Palace exhorting the Signory to make Piero lay down his arms, now in search of Luca Pitti to keep him steady to their cause. But no one was so active as Niccolò Soderini, who, arming himself and attended by nearly all the populace of the district, proceeded to the Palace of Messer Luca and besought him to take horse and come into the Piazza, where by supporting their friends in the Signory he would win a certain victory, and not to sit idle at home to be crushed ignominiously by armed, or shamefully beguiled by unarmed, enemies; otherwise he would soon repent of not having done what it would then be too late to do. If he desired the overthrow of Piero by combat,

1466. now was his time; if peace were his object, it was better to be in a position to dictate terms than be obliged to accept them. But Niccolò's words had no effect on Luca Pitti, whose mind was already made up, he having been won over by Piero with fresh promises and proposals of new alliances; for it had been arranged between them that one of Luca's nieces should wed Giovanni Tornabuoni. He therefore exhorted Niccolò to lay aside his arms and return to his house, for it ought to satisfy him that the city was governed by its Magistrates; and so it would be, and on every one disarming, the Signory, in which they had a majority, would decide their differences. Finding he could not alter Luca's mind, Niccolò went home, but said before going: 'Alone I can do no good to my city, but I can clearly foresee evil. The course you take will cost Florence her freedom, you your standing and estate, myself and others our country.'

§ 16. While the tumult prevailed the Signory had closed the Palace doors and shut themselves up with their Magistrates, showing favour to neither party. The citizens, and those of them especially who had sided with Messer Luca, on seeing Piero armed and his adversaries disarmed, began to bethink them how instead of attacking Piero they might become his friends. Accordingly the chief citizens and leaders of the factions repaired to the Palace, where, in the presence of the Signory, the condition of the city and the means by which it might be reunited were discussed at length. But inasmuch as Piero by reason of his infirmities could not come there, all, except Niccolò Soderini only, resolved to wait upon him at his house.

As for Niccolò, after committing his children and his affairs to the charge of his brother Messer Tommaso, he betook himself to his country-seat, to await there the issue of events, which he foresaw must be unhappy for himself and hurtful for his native city. The other citizens, however, went to Piero, when one of them, commissioned to speak for the rest, complained of the tumults that had arisen in the city, for which he said that he who first took arms was most to blame; but not knowing what it was that Piero, who had been the first to arm, desired, they had come to learn what his intentions were, and, if they found them to accord with the welfare of the city, to accept them. To this Piero answered that the originator of troubles is not he who first takes arms but he who first gives cause for arming; and were they to give more heed to what had been their conduct towards him, they would marvel less at what he had done to save himself; for they would see that it was their meetings by night, their signed declarations, their plots to deprive him of life and liberty, that had caused him to take arms, while the fact that these arms had not been carried outside his own door was plain proof that they were intended only for self-defence and not to attack others. He had no wish or desire save for his own quiet and safety, nor had he shown any sign of desiring more, for on the expiry of the authority of the *Balía* he had never thought of taking any violent step to renew it, but was well content that the Magistrates should govern the city in such ways as to them seemed good. They should remember how Cosimo and his sons had known to lead an honourable life in Florence as well without the *Balía* as with it, and that, in the year 1458, it was not the 1466.

1466. house of Cosimo but they themselves who had renewed it. If they did not now desire it, neither did he. This, however, seemed not enough for them, for he saw that it was their belief that if *he* remained in Florence, *they* could not. He never could have imagined, far less believed, that his and his father's friends would deem it impossible to live with him in Florence, where he had never given the least occasion to be thought other than a quiet and peaceable citizen. He then directed his discourse to Messer Diotisalvi and his brothers who were there present, upbraiding them in grave but resentful words with the poor return they had made for the benefits they had received from Cosimo and the trust he had reposed in them; and so telling was his rebuke that some of those who heard him were roused to such indignation that, had he not restrained them, they would have fallen on the Neroni with their swords.

In conclusion, Piero declared that he was ready to approve whatever they and the Signory might determine, and asked no more than to be allowed to live in peace and safety. This reply was much discussed, but nothing decided, save in a general way that it was necessary to reform the city and put the Government on a new footing.

§ 17. In Bernardo Lotti, who sat at the time as Gonfalonier of Justice, Piero placed no confidence, nor thought it politic to make any move while he was in office. This, however, Piero judged to be of little consequence as Bernardo's Magistracy was soon to expire. But on the election of the Signory who were to sit for the months of September and October of the year 1466,

Ruberto Lioni was chosen first Magistrate, who, every- 1466.
thing having been arranged beforehand, immediately on assuming office summoned the people to the Piazza, and had a new *Balía* constituted wholly favourable to Piero, which presently created the Magistrates approved of by the new Government. This so alarmed the chiefs of the adverse faction, that Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli fled to Naples, Messer Diotisalvi Neroni and Niccolò Soderini to Venice. Messer Luca Pitti alone, trusting to the promises made him by Piero, and to the new family alliance, remained in Florence. Those who fled were declared rebels. All the family of the Neroni were dispersed, even Messer Giovanni, then Archbishop of Florence, electing, lest worse should befall him, a voluntary exile to Rome. Many others who had already left the city were at once condemned to various places of banishment. Nor was all this enough; a public procession was decreed by way of thanksgiving to God for preserving the State and restoring the unity of the city. While this solemnity was being celebrated, several citizens were arrested and tortured, some of whom were afterwards executed, the rest banished. But in all these shifts of fortune no case was so notable as that of Luca Pitti, who in a moment was taught the difference between victory and defeat, between honour and disgrace. His palaces, recently frequented by crowds of his fellow-citizens, were now wholly deserted; while in the streets his friends and kinsmen, some of whom had been stripped of civil privileges, others of their estates, and all of whom were threatened, were afraid not only to be seen in his company, but even to salute him. The splendid edifices he had begun were abandoned by the builders, the services

1466. he had before received were changed to injuries, the civilities to insults, so that many who to obtain his favour had made him presents of great value, now demanded them back as things they had only lent him, while others who had been wont to praise him to the skies, now reviled him as an ingrate and a robber. He now repented when too late that he had not hearkened to Niccolò Soderini and chosen to die manfully, sword in hand, rather than live dishonoured among victorious enemies.

§ 18. Those who had been driven forth now began to contrive various schemes for recovering that city which they had not known how to keep. But before attempting any movement Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli resolved to sound Piero and find out whether there was any chance of a reconciliation. He therefore wrote to him to this purport: 'I laugh at the freaks of Fortune when I see how at her pleasure she transforms friends into enemies, and enemies into friends. You can call to mind that when your father was sent into exile, I too, thinking more of his wrongs than of my own danger, lost my country and nearly lost my life. While Cosimo lived, I never failed to honour and support your house, nor have I since his death ever desired to give you offence. True it is that your infirm health and the tender age of your sons so moved my fears that I judged it prudent to give such a form to the Government, that our city should not come to ruin upon your death. Hence the things done by me, not as against you, but for the welfare of my country. If I erred in what I did, my error should be overlooked in consideration of my good intentions and of my former

services. I cannot believe that after the firm fidelity which your house has so long received from me, you will now refuse me your compassion, and that all my deserts must be cancelled for a single fault.' To which letter Piero answered : 'That you laugh where you are is the cause I do not weep here, for were you laughing in Florence, I should be weeping in Naples. I admit that you wished my father well, and you must admit having been so recompensed by him, that if deeds are to be counted rather than words, the obligation is more on your side than on ours. Having been requited for what you did well, you should not now marvel if you receive your deserts for what you have done amiss. Nor should you allege love of country as your excuse, for none will ever believe that this city has been less loved and fostered by the Medici than by the Acciaiuoli. Live, therefore, dishonoured where you are, since you knew not how to live honoured here.' 1466.

§ 19. Thus cut off from all hope of forgiveness, Messer Agnolo repaired to Rome, where, in concert with the Archbishop and with other exiles, he did all he could to destroy the financial credit of the Medici in that city. To frustrate these attempts was no easy matter ; nevertheless, with the aid of his friends, Piero succeeded in doing so. In another direction Messer Diotisalvi and Niccolò Soderini used every endeavour to rouse the Venetian Senate against their native country, thinking that were the Florentines assailed by a fresh war, since their Government was new and unpopular, they would be unable to resist. At this time Giovan Francesco, son of Messer Palla Strozzi, 1466-1467.

1467. who in the revolution of 1434 had, together with his father, been banished from Florence, was living at Ferrara, where he was held in great esteem and reckoned one of the wealthiest merchants of that city. The new exiles showed Giovan Francesco how easily he might regain his country were the Venetians to undertake this enterprise, as it was believed they would willingly could they find any one to share the cost, though otherwise they might hesitate. Giovan Francesco, who longed to pay back the wrongs he had suffered, readily listened to these representations, and declared himself willing to contribute all he possessed to promote the enterprise. Whereupon the exiles betook themselves to the Doge and to the Senate, to whom they complained of their banishment. This, they said, had been inflicted for no other offence than their having wished their country to live under its laws, and that its Magistrates, and not merely a few of its citizens, should be held in honour. But that Piero de' Medici, with others who were his followers and were used to tyrannical ways, having, on a false pretext, taken arms and treacherously persuaded them to lay aside theirs, had driven them from their country; nor content with this, had made God Himself a decoy for the destruction of many more, who, under a pledge given them, had remained in the city, and while engaged in public and sacred ceremonies and in solemn supplications (as though to make the Deity an accomplice in the crime), had been imprisoned and put to death, a perfidy of unholy and execrable example. To chastise such outrages they knew not to whom they could turn with better hope of help than to that Senate, which, as it had always been free, should commiserate those who

had lost their freedom, Wherefore they exhorted 1467.
them as freemen to strike against tyrants, as devout men against the impious. Nor should they forget how they themselves had been robbed of Lombardy by the family of the Medici, when Cosimo, in opposition to other citizens, had favoured and supported Francesco Sforza against the Senate of Venice; so that if the justice of these complaints failed to move them, their own righteous hatred and resentment should stir them to vengeance.

§ 20. These last words so inflamed the whole Senate that they resolved that Bartolommeo Colleoni, their Captain, should at once attack the Florentine dominion. An army was assembled with all speed, and was joined by Ercole d'Este, sent by Borso, Marquis of Ferrara. The Florentines being taken by surprise, the enemy at the first onset seized and burned Borgo di Dovadola, and wrought some damage in the surrounding country; but inasmuch as after the faction hostile to Piero had been expelled, the Signory had entered into a new league with Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, and with King Ferrando, and had engaged Federigo, Count of Urbino, as their Captain, finding themselves well backed by friends, they made less account of enemies. For Ferrando sent his eldest son, Alfonso, and Galeazzo came in person, each with a suitable following, and all made head at Castrocaro, a stronghold of the Florentines standing at the base of the mountains which descend from Tuscany to Romagna. The enemy meanwhile having fallen back towards Imola, there ensued, according to the usage of these days, various indecisive skirmishes between the two armies; neither side storming or

1467. laying siege to any place of strength, nor offering battle to its adversary, but each remaining on the defensive, and displaying a marvellous lack of spirit. This inertness displeased the Florentines, who found themselves harassed by a war on which they had to spend much, and from which they could hope little. Consequently the Signory found fault with the citizens whom they had appointed Commissaries for the campaign. These rejoined that the blame lay with Duke Galeazzo, who, having great authority and small experience, knew not how to conduct the campaign, nor would trust those who knew, so that while he remained with the army no skilful or useful movement could be made. Whereupon the Florentines represented to the Duke that while it was greatly for their interest that he should have come in person to their assistance, since his name alone was enough to inspire terror in their foes, still they thought far more of his welfare and that of his Dukedom than of their own advantage; for while he was safe they could hope that all else would prosper, but were anything to befall him, they must fear the worst. That therefore they deemed it of doubtful expediency that he should absent himself for any long time from Milan, where his rule being new, and his neighbours powerful and little to be trusted, any one desiring to plot against him might easily do so. Wherefore they urged him to return to his Dukedom, leaving a part of his forces for their defence. Galeazzo was pleased with this advice, and, without thinking more about it, returned to Milan. Freed from his interference, the Florentine Captains, to show they had given a true reason for the remissness of which they had been accused, drew nearer to the enemy and

so came to a pitched battle, which lasted for half a day 1467.
without either army giving in. And yet not a single man was slain, only a few horsemen wounded, and some prisoners made on both sides. The season having arrived when the armies were accustomed to retire into winter-quarters, Messer Bartolommeo withdrew to Ravenna, the Florentine troops into Tuscany, and those of the King and the Duke into the territories of their respective Princes. And as no such movement in Florence as the Florentine exiles had promised would result from this attack was seen to have taken place, and as no pay was forthcoming for the hired troops, proposals were now made for an accord which were agreed to without much discussion; whereupon the Florentine exiles, deprived of hope, dispersed in all directions. Messer Diotisalvi returned to Ferrara, where he was received and maintained by the Marquis Borso. Niccolò Soderini went to Ravenna, where, in receipt of a small pension from the Venetians, he grew old and died. He was accounted an honest and brave man, but slow and hesitating in his resolves, and it was this infirmity that caused him when Gonfalonier of Justice to let an opportunity of victory slip, which afterwards, as a private man, he sought in vain to recover.

§ 21. Peace being concluded, those citizens who had 1468.
got the upper hand in Florence thinking their victory incomplete unless they chastised severely not their adversaries only but all who were distrusted by their party, wrought on Bardo Altoviti, who sat at this time as Gonfalonier of Justice, once more to deprive many citizens of their civil standing, and to banish many

1468. others; thus strengthening their own authority, and inspiring terror in their opponents. They used their power without scruple of any kind, and so conducted themselves that it seemed as though God and Fate had given the city over to them as a prey. Few of their misdeeds came to Piero's knowledge, and to those few, owing to his infirmities, he could supply no remedy. Indeed, so crippled was he, that the only weapon he could use was his tongue, nor could he deal otherwise with offenders than by admonishing and exhorting them to keep within bounds, and rather enjoy than destroy a city that had been saved. But to amuse the people he resolved to celebrate with great magnificence the marriage of his son Lorenzo, to whom Clarice, a daughter of the house of the Orsini, had been affianced. These nuptials were accordingly solemnised with every circumstance of pomp and splendour befitting his great station. Many days were spent in dances devised for the occasion, in banquets, and in representations of scenes from ancient history. To which, as a further display of the greatness of the house of Medici, were added two military spectacles, in one of which knights on horseback represented an encounter in the field, while in the other a fortress was stormed. Nothing could surpass the skill with which these shows were contrived, or the spirit wherewith they were carried out.

§ 22. While these things were passing in Florence, the rest of Italy lived at peace, but gravely disquieted by the growing power of the Turk, who, continuing his
1470. attacks on Christendom, had taken Negropont, to the great discredit and injury of the Christian cause. At

this time died Borso, Marquis of Ferrara, who was 1471.
succeeded by his brother Ercole. About the same time died also Gismondo of Rimini, the perpetual enemy of the Church, leaving his dominions to his illegitimate son Ruberto, who for his skill in warfare was afterwards reckoned one of the first captains of Italy. Pope Paul also dying about this time, Sixtus IV., who before his elevation was known as Francesco of Savona, was created in his place, a man of the humblest and meanest parentage, but raised by his ability, first to be General of the Order of St. Francis, and afterwards Cardinal. This pontiff was the first who let it be seen what power a Pope can wield, and how many things, before deemed scandals, may be covered by Papal authority. Among the members of his family were Piero and Girolamo, whom every one believed to be his sons, but whom he cloaked under more discreet names. Piero, who was a monk, he promoted to be titular Cardinal of San Sisto. To Girolamo he gave the city of Forlì, taking it from Antonio Ordelaffi, whose ancestors had long been its Lords. This aspiring conduct made him more thought of by the Princes of Italy, all of whom courted his friendship. To which end the Duke of Milan gave Caterina, his natural daughter, in marriage to Girolamo, and with her, as her dower, the city of Imola, whereof he had despoiled Taddeo of the Alidosi. Between this Duke and King Ferrando a further alliance by marriage was also contracted, Elisabetta, daughter of the King's first-born son Alfonso, being wedded to Gian Galeazzo, the Duke's eldest son.

§ 23. In Italy, therefore, great tranquillity prevailed,

the chief care of the Princes being to keep watch on one another, and by intermarriages, new alliances, and leagues secure themselves one against another. Nevertheless, amid this profound peace, Florence was grievously troubled by her own citizens, against whose ambition Piero, hindered by his infirmities, could make no stand. Still, to have a clear conscience and see whether he could not make those citizens ashamed, he called them to his house and thus spoke to them: 'Never could I have believed that a time was to come when the methods and behaviour of my friends would make me love and long for my enemies, and wish that victory had been defeat. For I thought I had the fellowship of men whose desires would have some limit and measure, and who, having been avenged on their enemies, would be satisfied to live in their country secure and honoured. But now I find I have been woefully deceived, and that I little knew the ambitious nature of men, and yours least of all. For it is not enough for you to be chiefs in so great a city, and, though few in number, to monopolise all those honours, dignities, and advantages which formerly were distributed among many; it is not enough to have the estates of your enemies shared among you, and have it in your power to crush others with public burdens, exempted from which you yourselves possess all public privileges, but you must needs visit every one with every sort of wrong. You rob your neighbours of their goods, traffic in Justice, set at naught the sentences of the Courts, oppress the peaceful and exalt the insolent. I do not believe that in all the rest of Italy there could be found so many instances of violence and greed as occur in this city. Has our country

given us life that we should take her life away? Has she given us success that we should destroy her? Has she crowned us with honour that we should disgrace her? I pledge my word as a man of honour, that if you persist in conduct which makes me regret having won a victory, I will give you cause to repent having abused it.' These citizens made answers suitable to the place and the occasion, yet turned not from their evil ways. Whereupon Piero secretly summoned Agnolo Acciaiuoli to Cafaggiuolo, and conferred with him at length regarding the condition of the city. Nor can there be a doubt that had he not been prevented by death, Piero, in order to quell the insolence of those within the city, would have restored all the exiles. But death put an end to his righteous designs. Tormented by bodily infirmities and distress of mind, he died in his fifty-third year. From having always, 1469.
down to the closing years of his life, been associated with Cosimo, his father, and having passed the few years during which he survived him in civil conflicts and bodily suffering, his worth and goodness could not be fully recognised by his country. He was buried near his father in the Church of San Lorenzo, and his obsequies were conducted with all the pomp due to so great a citizen. He left two sons, Lorenzo and Giuliano, who gave promise of becoming useful men to their country; yet their youth caused every one anxiety.

§ 24. In Florence, among the foremost of her ruling citizens, but far superior to all the rest, was Messer Tommaso Soderini, whose wisdom and authority were recognised not only in the city itself but by all the Princes of Italy. Towards him, on Piero's death, all

1469. eyes were turned; many citizens visited him at his house, and many Princes sent him letters as though he were now the head of the State. To these letters, in his prudence, and from justly weighing his own fortunes with those of the house of Medici, Tommaso sent no reply, while to the citizens he made answer that it was not to *his* house, but to the house of the Medici, that they ought to come. And to confirm by acts what he had set forth in words, he convoked all the heads of noble families to the Convent of Sant' Antonio, where, having also brought Lorenzo and Giuliano, he spoke at length, and weightily, on the condition of the city, the affairs of Italy, and the humours of its Princes, winding up by saying that if they desired to live in Florence in unity and peace, secure from divisions within and from wars without, it was before all things needful to render obedience to these young men, and maintain the standing of their house: for men accept without complaint conditions they are used to, whereas novelties, though they be readily adopted are also readily abandoned, and it is always easier to maintain an authority which has lived down envy by lapse of time, than to raise up a new one to which numberless causes may soon put an end. After Messer Tommaso had spoken, Lorenzo likewise spoke, and, though young, with so much sense and modesty as filled all with hopes that he was such a man as afterwards he proved to be. Before they quitted the place of meeting the assembled citizens made oath that they accepted the young men as their sons, and would be to them as fathers. This resolved, Lorenzo and Giuliano were honoured as the heads of the Republic; nor did the citizens depart from the counsel given them by Messer Tommaso.

§ 25. While the city lived thus in great quiet both within and without her walls, there being no war to disturb the general tranquillity, an unexpected tumult broke out, the forerunner, as it were, of future troubles. Among the families ruined in the fall of Luca Pitti was that of the Nardi; for Salvestro and his brothers, the heads of that house, had first been sent into exile, and afterwards, on the outbreak of the war begun by Bartolommeo Colleoni, were declared rebels. Among the Nardi was a certain Bernardo, brother of Salvestro, a rash, high-spirited youth; who, unable by reason of his poverty to support exile, and, owing to the peace that had been concluded, seeing no opening for a return to his country, resolved to attempt something that might lead to a new war; for often from small beginnings spring momentous results, and men are readier to follow up an enterprise that has been set on foot than to start a fresh one. Bernardo had many acquaintances in Prato, and very many in the district of Pistoia, more especially among the Palandra, a family which, although of the peasant class, abounded in men bred, as is the usage of their country, in arms and blood. He knew that, from having been harshly treated by the Florentine Magistrates in consequence of their private feuds, the family were discontented. He knew also the humour of the Pratesi, that they thought their governors arrogant and grasping, and were some of them disaffected towards the Florentine rule. All which circumstances gave him hopes that by causing Prato to rebel he might kindle a fire in Tuscany which so many would join to feed, that those who sought to quench it would be unequal to the task. He communicated this scheme of his to Messer Diotisalvi, and 1470.

1470. asked him what assistance he might expect to have through him from the Princes of Italy, were he to succeed in seizing Prato. Messer Diotisalvi thought the enterprise most hazardous, and, indeed, almost certain to fail. Nevertheless, seeing an opportunity of a fresh appeal to Fortune at another's risk, he encouraged Bernardo to make the attempt, assuring him of aid both from Bologna and Ferrara if he could hold and defend Prato for at least fifteen days. On obtaining this promise Bernardo was filled with the highest hopes and secretly betook himself to Prato, where, imparting the scheme to some of his friends, he found them well disposed to engage in it. He found, too, the same spirit and readiness in the Palandra men, and having arranged with them as to the time and manner of the attempt, he acquainted Messer Diotisalvi with all particulars.

§ 26. Cesare Petrucci was at this time *Podestà* of Prato on behalf of the Florentine people. Governors of this class are wont to keep by them the keys of the gates of the town, and occasionally, when there seems no cause for suspicion, if asked for them by some one of the townsmen that he may go forth or enter at night, they give them to him. Knowing this to be the custom, Bernardo, accompanied by the Palandra men and about a hundred other armed followers, presented himself shortly before dawn at the gate on the Pistoia side, when those within the town who were privy to the plot, likewise armed, and one of them going to the *Podestà* asked for the keys, pretending that a townsman wanted admission. The *Podestà*, who had no reason to suspect the use they were to be put to,

sent a servant with the keys, which after he had got some distance from the Palace were snatched from him by the conspirators, and the gate being opened Bernardo and his armed followers were admitted. By mutual agreement the conspirators then separated into two companies, one of which, guided by a citizen of Prato named Salvestro, seized upon the citadel, while the other under Bernardo got possession of the Palace and gave the Governor and his household in custody to certain of their party. They then began to raise a tumult, parading the town and shouting *Liberty*. It was now day, and many of the common people hearing the uproar ran into the public square, and learning that the citadel and Palace had been seized, and the *Podestà* with his household made prisoners, were lost in wonder as to how all this had happened. The Eight citizens who form the chief Magistracy of the town now assembled in their Palace to consider what was to be done. After parading the town for a time with his armed men, Bernardo seeing that none joined him, and learning that the Eight were met, went to where they were, and said that the object of his enterprise was to free them and his native city from servitude, and that it would be glorious for them to arm and join him in a noble effort which would bring them lasting peace and endless fame. He reminded them of their ancient liberty, and contrasted it with their present condition, assuring them of certain succour should they resist for a few days such slender forces as the Florentines could muster against them; and he said that he had confederates in Florence who, on hearing that Prato had embraced their cause, would at once declare themselves. The Eight were nowise moved by 1470.

1470. his words, and answered that they knew not whether Florence was free or enslaved; that was a matter on which they need form no opinion, but of this they were certain, that for themselves they sought no other liberty than to obey those Magistrates by whom Florence was governed, from whom they had never suffered any such injury as should make them take up arms against them. Wherefore they exhorted him to release their *Podestà*, withdraw his followers from the town, and promptly extricate himself from the peril into which he had rashly run. Undismayed by these words, Bernardo determined to see whether the Pratesi, though unmoved by his prayers, might not be moved by fear, and to terrify them resolved to put Petrucci to death. Accordingly, fetching him from prison, he gave order that he should be hanged from a window of the Palace.

Petrucci, with the halter round his neck, was already near the window, when, seeing Bernardo giving directions for his execution, he turned to him and said: 'Bernardo, you are putting me to death in the belief that afterwards you will be followed by the Pratesi; but the contrary will happen; for such is the reverence with which this people regards the Governors sent it by the people of Florence, that when it sees this wrong done to me, it will at once conceive such hatred against you as will cause your destruction. It is not my death, therefore, but my life that can help you to victory. For if I command the Pratesi to do as you desire, they will more readily obey me than you, and by my compliance with your orders your design may be fulfilled.' Bernardo, having but few followers, thought this sound advice, and accordingly bade

Petrucci go upon a terrace overlooking the Piazza and command the people to render him obedience. Which having done, he was sent back to prison. 1470.

§ 27. The weakness of the conspirators was by this time revealed, and many Florentines who lived in the town were now got together, among whom was Messer Giorgio Ginori, a Knight of Rhodes. He was the first to use arms. For while Bernardo was moving about the Piazza arguing with the people, now imploring them, now threatening them with what he would do were he not followed and obeyed, Messer Giorgio with many companions rushing upon him, wounded and made him prisoner. This done, it was an easy matter to release the *Podestà* and overpower the other conspirators, for being few in number and scattered through the town, nearly all of them were captured or killed. An exaggerated rumour had meanwhile reached Florence to the effect that Prato had been taken, the *Podestà* and his household slain, and that the town was full of enemies; that Pistoia too was up in arms, and that many of her citizens had joined in the conspiracy. Consequently the Palace was forthwith crowded with citizens coming to consult with the Signory. It so chanced that Ruberto of San Severino, a captain of great renown in arms, was at this time in Florence, and it was decided to send him to Prato with all the troops he could muster, with orders to get as near the town as he could, to report fully on what had taken place, and use all such remedies as his prudence might suggest. Ruberto had got but a short way beyond the walled village of Campi, when he was met by a messenger from Petrucci with word

1470. that Bernardo had been captured, his companions slain or put to flight, and that the whole tumult was at an end. Whereupon he returned to Florence, whither Bernardo was brought soon after, and being examined as to the real object of his enterprise (which was found to have been a very feeble affair), he answered that he had undertaken it because he would rather die in Florence than live in exile, and desired that his death at least should be attended by some noteworthy achievement.

§ 28. This disturbance being quelled almost at the instant it broke out, the citizens reverted to their customary mode of life, thinking to enjoy without further cause for anxiety the Government they had established and strengthened. Hence were bred in the city those evils which are commonly generated during peace. For the young men, living under less restraint than heretofore, spent extravagantly on dress, on feasting, and the like wantonness, and, having nothing else to do, squandered time and substance on play and women, their sole aim being to show themselves splendid in their attire, shrewd and knowing in their talk; he who was readiest and most biting in his sarcasm being admired as the wisest and wittiest. To this school of manners more vogue was given by the courtiers of Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, who, with his
1471. Duchess and all the Ducal Court, came, in fulfilment it was said of a vow, to Florence, where he was received with the magnificence befitting so great a Prince and so good a friend to our city. On this occasion was seen what never before was seen in Florence, namely, that though it was the season of Lent, during which the Church commands us to fast and

to abstain from flesh, this Court, without respect to God or the Church, fed on flesh daily. Many spectacles were exhibited in honour of the Duke. Among others, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles was represented in the Church of Santo Spirito, on which occasion, from the profusion of fireworks used in a solemnity of this character, the church caught fire and was burned to the ground; and it was believed by many that God in His wrath had sent this sign of His displeasure. But if the Duke found the city of Florence pervaded with courtly fopperies, and manners opposed to all republican simplicity, he left it much more so. Which led good citizens to think that a check was needed, and this they imposed in the shape of a sumptuary law limiting the expenditure on dress, feasts, and funerals. 1471.

§ 29. In the midst of this profound peace a new and unlooked-for disturbance arose in Tuscany. In the district of Volterra an alum mine was discovered by certain of the inhabitants of the country, who recognising its utility, in order to have the support of persons who could assist them with money and protect them by their influence, took certain Florentine citizens into partnership, giving them a share in the profits of the mine. As commonly happens in new enterprises, the affair was at first little thought of by the people of Volterra, but on its importance coming to be understood, they tardily and fruitlessly sought to remedy what at an earlier stage might easily have been adjusted. The matter began to be discussed in their Councils, where it was dèclared unfair that a source of wealth discovered on public lands should be diverted 1472.

1472. into the hands of a private Company. Envoys were sent to Florence to support this view, and the question was referred to the arbitration of certain citizens, who, whether from having been bribed by the Company, or because such was really their opinion, reported that it was unjust on the part of the people of Volterra to seek to deprive their fellow-citizens of the fruits of their industry and skill. That, therefore, the alum mines belonged not to the Community of Volterra but to the private Company; nevertheless, that it was equitable that the latter should make annual payment of a fixed sum by way of royalty. This award rather increased than lessened the disturbances and feuds in Volterra, where nothing else was talked of, not merely in the Councils but throughout the whole town; the Community demanding back what they considered had been wrongfully taken from them, the private adventurers seeking to retain what, in the first place, they had acquired, and afterwards had their rights in confirmed by the award of the Florentines. To such a height did the dispute reach that Pecorino, a citizen of good standing in Volterra, was slain, and after him many others who had taken his part. Their houses also were sacked and burned, by which outburst of violence the populace were so excited that they could hardly be withheld from putting to death the Governors sent there on behalf of the Florentine people.

§ 30. After this first affront the Volterrani resolved, before going further, to send a new set of envoys to Florence to inform the Signory that, if they were willing to abide by their ancient covenants, the people of Volterra on their part would continue to maintain

their town in its ancient allegiance. The answer to 1472.
be given to this message was much debated. Messer Tommaso Soderini advised that the citizens of Volterra should be received back on any terms on which they were willing to return; for he thought this was no time to be kindling a flame so near that it might set fire to their own house. He feared the disposition of the Pope, the power of the King, nor could he confide in the friendship either of the Venetians or of the Duke, not knowing how far he could trust the good faith of the one or the valour of the other; and he cited the old saw, '*Better a lean peace than a fat victory.*' On the other hand Lorenzo de' Medici thinking it a fit occasion to display his wisdom and prudence, and being incited thereto by those who envied the authority of Messer Tommaso, declared that an expedition ought to be undertaken, and that they must chastise with arms the insolence of the men of Volterra; for unless they were corrected in a way that would be remembered, others would not fear or hesitate on the most trifling pretext to follow their example. An expedition being accordingly resolved on, answer was made to the Volterrani that they could not demand the observance of covenants which they themselves had violated, and must either submit unconditionally to the authority of the Signory or expect war. When this reply was brought them the citizens of Volterra prepared for their defence, fortifying their town, and sending to all the Italian Princes to invite help. Few listened to their appeal, the Sienese and the Lord of Piombino alone holding out any hope of assistance. The Florentines, on their part, judging that a victory to be useful must be

1472. speedy, got together ten thousand foot-soldiers and two thousand horse, who under command of Federigo, Lord of Urbino, invaded the Volterra country and easily seized the whole of it. They then laid siege to the city itself, which from its elevated site, and from being escarped on all sides, could only be assailed at the point where now stands the church of Sant' Alessandro. The Volterrani had engaged for their support a company of about a thousand freelances, who, seeing the vigour of the Florentine attack, and doubting their being able to resist it, grew slack in the defence, though ready enough to commit daily outrages against their employers. Whereupon those unhappy citizens, assailed from without by foes and harassed from within by friends, despairing of safety began to think of surrender. Obtaining no better terms, they threw themselves on the mercy of the Florentine Commissaries, who caused the gates to be opened, and bringing in the greater part of their army, proceeded to the Palace where the Priors were sitting. These they ordered to depart to their houses. As they went, one of them was insulted and robbed by a soldier. From this beginning, men being always readier for evil than for good, there followed the sack and ruin of the town, which for an entire day was plundered and ravaged, neither women nor sacred places being spared. The soldiery, including those who had so ill defended the city as well as those who had assailed it, alike shared in the spoil. The news of this victory was received in Florence with great rejoicing, and as the expedition was entirely the work of Lorenzo, he at once gained the highest reputation. But when one of Messer Tommaso Soderini's most

familiar friends reproached him for the advice he had given, saying, '*What think you now that Volterra is taken?*' he answered: '*To me it seems lost; had we received it on terms, we should have drawn from it both advantage and safety; having to hold it by force, it will in troubled times be a source of weakness and danger, in peaceful times of anxiety and expense.*' 1474.

§ 31. About this time the Pope, desiring to enforce obedience on the towns of the Church, had caused Spoleto, which in consequence of internal feuds had risen in revolt, to be sacked. Afterwards, to chastise similar contumacy, he laid siege to Città di Castello. Niccolò Vitelli, Lord of that city, was the familiar friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, who failed not to send him succour—not indeed enough to defend Niccolò, but quite enough to sow the first seeds of enmity between Pope Sixtus and the Medici, which afterwards bore evil fruits. Nor would those fruits have been so long in showing themselves but for the death of Fra Piero, Cardinal of San Sisto. For this Cardinal making the tour of Italy, and visiting Venice and Milan under colour of honouring by his presence the nuptials of Ercole, Marquis of Ferrara, had sounded the minds of those powers to ascertain how they stood disposed towards the Florentines. He died, however, on his return to Rome, not without suspicion of having been poisoned by the Venetians, who had good reason to fear the Pope's power while seconded by Fra Piero's courage and activity. For though basely born, and afterwards meanly bred in a convent, there was revealed in him, from the hour he was created Cardinal, such pride and ambition, that not the

1474. Cardinalate merely but the Pontificate itself seemed unequal to his aspirations. As when, upon a banquet he gave in Rome, which would have been thought prodigal for any King, he spent upwards of twenty thousand florins. Deprived of this minister, Sixtus pursued his designs with less activity. Nevertheless when the Florentines, the Duke, and the Venetians renewed their league, leaving room for the Pope and the King of Naples to join if they thought fit, Sixtus and the King entered into a league between themselves, to which the other powers might on applying be admitted. It was now apparent that Italy was divided into two camps, for every day things were happening which occasioned hatred between the two leagues, as in the case of the island of Cyprus, which King Ferrando coveted, and the Venetians seized. This led the Pope and the King to draw still closer together.

In these days Federigo, Lord of Urbino, who had long fought under the Florentine standard, was reckoned in Italy most excellent in arms. To deprive the hostile league of this leader the King and Pope resolved to win him over, and the Pope advised him, while the King entreated him to repair to Naples. This invitation Federigo accepted, to the astonishment and vexation of the Florentines, who thought it must fare with him as it had with Jacopo Piccinino. But the contrary happened, for Federigo was appointed Captain of the new league, and returned from Rome and Naples laden with honours. The Pope and King next made trial whether the Lords of Romagna and the Sienese, through whom they hoped to inflict still greater injuries on the Florentines, might not be tempted to join them. Aware of what was going on,

the Florentines provided as well as they could against 1474.
the ambitious designs of their enemies, and as they had lost Federigo of Urbino, took Ruberto of Rimini into their service. They likewise renewed their league with the Perugians, and entered into an alliance with the Lord of Faenza. The Pope and King alleged as their cause of quarrel with the Florentines the refusal of the latter to separate from the Venetians and take part with them. For the Pope thought that the Church could not maintain its credit, nor Count Girolamo his authority in Romagna, while Florence and Venice held together. The Florentines on the other hand suspected a design to embroil them with the Venetians, not from any desire to have them for friends, but to gain an opportunity for injuring them. This distrust and these hostile humours prevailed throughout Italy for two years before they led to active disturbance. The first outbreak, though but a small affair, was in Tuscany.

§ 32. Braccio of Perugia, of whose renown in arms I have often spoken, left behind him two sons, Oddo and Carlo. Carlo was then of tender years; Oddo, as has already been told, was slain by the inhabitants of the Val di Lamone. When Carlo was old enough to serve as a soldier, the Venetians, out of regard for his father's memory and from the expectations they had formed of the youth himself, received him as one of the Condottieri of their Republic. The term of his engagement expiring at this time, he did not desire that the Senate should at once renew it, but determined to see whether he could not, on the strength of his name and of his father's reputation, recover his

1477-8. Perugian estates. To this the Venetians, accustomed to extend their dominion in the troubles of other countries, readily consented. Carlo accordingly came to Tuscany, and finding the affairs of Perugia complicated by her alliance with the Florentines, yet desiring that his movement should be attended by some memorable exploit, attacked the Sienese, alleging that they were in his debt for services rendered by his father in the affairs of their Republic, for which he must be paid. And so furious was his onset that the whole Sienese territory was thrown into disorder. On being thus insulted, the citizens of Siena, always ready to think ill of the Florentines, persuaded themselves that everything that had been done was done with their consent, and made endless complaints to the Pope and to the King. They likewise sent envoys to Florence lamenting the great wrong inflicted on them, and covertly hinting that without support Carlo could never have ventured on such an outrage. The Florentines disclaimed all blame, protested their willingness to do what they could to make Carlo refrain from further injuries, and issued orders to him, in terms dictated by the envoys, to discontinue his attacks on the Sienese. This gave offence to Carlo, who declared that in failing to second him the Florentines had deprived themselves of a great conquest, and him of a great reputation; for such was the cowardice of the city, and so inadequate its arrangements for defence, that he could have promised them speedy possession. He then took his departure, returning to his accustomed service with the Venetians. The Sienese, though saved from their perilous position by the intervention of the Florentines, continued full of

resentment against them, thinking that to be freed from 1478.
an evil by those who had first contrived it laid them under no obligation.

§ 33. While the relations between King and Pope with regard to Tuscany were on the footing I have indicated, in Lombardy there occurred an event of even graver moment, and presaging even worse calamities. Cola Montano, a learned and ambitious man, taught the Latin tongue to certain of the best-born youths of Milan. Whether from disgust at the life and habits of the Duke, or moved by some other cause, he declaimed in all his lectures against rendering obedience to a wicked Prince, declaring that those only were to be spoken of as glorious and happy to whom it had been given by Nature or Fortune to be born and live in a Republic, and showing how all the most famous men had been bred under Republics and not under Princes—the former fostering worthy citizens, and profiting by their virtues, the latter fearing and destroying them. The young men with whom Cola was most intimate were Giovan Andrea Lampugnano, Carlo Visconti, and Girolamo Olgiato. In their presence he would often speak of the vile character of the Duke, and of the infelicity of those who lived under his Government; and so absolutely did he trust the courage and attachment of these young men, that he made them swear that so soon as they were old enough they would endeavour to rescue their country from the tyranny of this Prince. These youths, therefore, being possessed by this passion, which grew always with their years and with fuller knowledge of the disposition and conduct of the Duke, and which was after-

wards inflamed by special injuries to themselves, became eager to carry out their design.

Duke Galeazzo was licentious and cruel, countless instances of both which vices had made him greatly hated. Not content with corrupting the virtue of noble ladies, he took delight in publishing their shame; nor was it enough for him to put men to death, unless cruel tortures were added. Nay, he lived under the infamy of having murdered his own mother. For thinking that in her presence he took a lower place, he treated her so harshly that she withdrew to her dower seat of Cremona. On her journey thither she fell ill and died; and it was believed by many that she had been poisoned by her son. The Duke in his gallantries had dishonoured Carlo and Girolamo, and had refused to give Giovan Andrea possession of the abbey of Miramondo, which the Pope had bestowed on one of his kinsmen. The young men were thus stirred at once to save their country from oppression and to avenge private wrongs; and they hoped that if they succeeded in slaying Galeazzo, they would be joined not only by many of the nobles, but also by the whole body of the people. The attempt being thus resolved upon, the conspirators met often to consult; but this, as they were old friends, attracted no attention. They were continually talking the matter over, and in order to practise their hands, and nerve their courage for the deed, would thrust at one another in the side or on the breast with the sheaths of the daggers they were to use. Time and place were discussed. In the citadel there could be no safety for them. In the hunting-field there was uncertainty and danger. When the Duke came forth to walk

through the city it might be difficult to approach him. 1476.
Even at a banquet there might be risk. Finally, they resolved to fall upon him at some public ceremony or pageant, where they could be sure that he would come, and where, under various pretexts, their friends might assemble. They also settled that should any of them be arrested by the Duke's retainers, the attempt would be carried out by the rest with the help of their armed companions.

§ 34. It was now the year 1476, the festival of Christ's Nativity was at hand; and because on the day of San Stefano the Duke was wont to repair with great pomp to the church of that martyr, the conspirators thought this would be a fit place and time to effect their purpose. Accordingly, on the morning of the feast, they ordered some of their most trusty friends and followers to arm themselves, assigning as a reason that they were going to support Giovan Andrea, who, in defiance of other claimants, sought to lead a certain conduit to his own lands. This armed band the conspirators brought to the church, pretending that before their departure they desired to take leave of the Duke. On other pretexts they assembled many more of their friends and kinsmen in the same place, hoping that when the deed of violence was done every one would take part with them in the further prosecution of their enterprise, it being their intention, after the Duke was slain, to join these armed men and parade through the parts of the city where they thought they could most easily rouse the people, and get them to arm against the Duchess and the chief members of the Government; for they reckoned that the common

1476. people, who were then suffering sorely from famine, would willingly side with them. They proposed therefore to hand over the palaces of Messer Cecco Simonetta, Giovanni Botti, and Francesco Lucani, all of whom were leading men in the Government, to be pillaged by the mob, and thus secure its adherence while they restored freedom to the city. Their plan being thus settled and their minds made up to execute it, Giovan Andrea and the others went betimes to the church, where they heard mass together; after which Giovan Andrea, kneeling before the image of Sant' Ambrogio, thus prayed: 'Patron Saint of this our city, who knowest our thoughts and the ends for which we risk so many dangers, aid our efforts, and by furthering justice show that injustice displeaseth thee.'

The Duke on his part was warned by many signs that, should he visit the church, death awaited him. In the morning he put on the corslet he commonly wore, but afterwards took it off, whether as thinking it unbecoming, or because it hurt him. He desired to have mass celebrated in the citadel, then found that his chaplain had gone off to San Stefano to deck the altar, and when he would have had the Bishop of Como to officiate in his place, the Bishop gave reasons why he should be excused. Finding he must needs go to the church, he sent for his sons Gian Galeazzo and Hermes, whom he embraced and kissed over and over again as though he could not bear to part from them. At last, however, he left the citadel, and with the Ferrarese envoy on one side and the Mantuan on the other, proceeded to the church.

In the meanwhile to avoid suspicion, and shelter

themselves from the extreme cold, the conspirators 1476.
had withdrawn into a chamber belonging to the Archpriest, who was their friend, but on hearing that the Duke had arrived they came into the church, where Giovan Andrea and Girolamo stationed themselves on the right hand of the entrance, and Carlo on the left. By this time those who walked before the Duke had already entered the church, the Duke himself following after, surrounded, as at such a solemnity befitted his Ducal station, by a great concourse. Lampugnano and Girolamo were the first to move. As though to clear the way for the Duke they got near him, and drawing the short, pointed daggers they had hidden in their sleeves, fell upon him. Lampugnano stabbed him twice—once in the belly, and again in the throat. Girolamo also stabbed him in the throat and on the breast. Carlo Visconti being stationed near the door, and the Duke having passed onward, could not when his comrades made their attack inflict a wound in front, but struck him twice—once in the back, the second time in the shoulder. All these six strokes were dealt so swiftly and suddenly that, almost before any one saw what was doing, the Duke was on the ground, nor had he time to utter a word, save that as he fell he called on Our Lady for help.

When the Duke fell there rose a great outcry; many swords were drawn, and, as will happen in unforeseen disasters, some fled from, while others ran towards the tumult, aimlessly, and in ignorance of what had passed. Howbeit, they who had been nearest to the Duke, and had seen him slain, and recognised his murderers, pursued them. Of the conspirators, Giovan Andrea, seeking to make his escape from the

1476. church, got among the women who were there in great number, seated, as is their wont, on the ground, and being caught and entangled by their dresses, was in consequence overtaken and killed by a Moor, one of the Duke's grooms. Carlo also was slain by the bystanders. Girolamo Olgiato, who escaped through the crowd from the church, on hearing that his comrades were slain, not knowing whither else to flee, made for his own home. Here he was denied entrance by his father and brothers; but his mother, taking pity on her son, made him over to the care of a certain priest, an old friend of the family, who clothing him in his own dress led him to his house, where for two days he lay concealed, not without hope that a rising might yet take place in Milan whereby his safety would be secured. When no rising followed, he, through fear that he might be discovered where he lay, tried to escape in disguise, but being recognised fell into the hands of the officers of justice, when all the details of the plot were revealed. Though but three-and-twenty years of age, Girolamo showed no less courage in his death than he had before in his actions. For when he stood stripped naked before the executioner whose axe was raised to strike him, he spoke these words, being a scholar, in the Latin tongue—*Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti.*[1]

The plot entered into by these unhappy youths was contrived with secrecy and executed with courage. What ruined them was that those who they hoped would follow and defend them, did neither. This example should be a lesson to Princes to live in such a manner

[1] Death is bitter; Fame eternal; the deed I have done will be long remembered.

as shall make them so loved and honoured that none who would slay them can think to escape. And let others learn how vain is the hope that the multitude, even when disaffected, will second or support them in peril.

All Italy was dismayed by this tragedy, but far more by another which followed soon after in Florence, whereby the peace that for twelve years had prevailed throughout the country was broken up, as shall be shown in the following Book, which, as it is to have a sad and sorrowful ending, so shall have a bloody and terrible beginning.

BOOK VIII

§ 1. Since the beginning of this Book stands, as it were, between two conspiracies—one of them, whereof I have just spoken, taking place in Milan, the other, of which I am about to speak, in Florence—it might be expected that, following my usual method of writing, I should here say something of the different kinds of conspiracy, and of their importance. And this I would willingly do, had I not already written of them in another place, or had the subject admitted of being disposed of in few words. But since it is of a nature that requires careful handling, and as it has elsewhere been very fully discussed by me, I shall here pass it by, and, turning to another matter, shall show how the Government of the Medici, to secure for their house a sole and undivided authority in the city, and raise it, by constitutional methods, above others, was obliged, after overcoming all those enemies who had openly opposed it, to subdue those also who were plotting secretly against it. For so long as the Medici had to contend with any of the other families on a footing of equal credit and authority, the citizens who disliked their influence could oppose them openly without fear of being crushed upon the first show of hostility; because, from the Magistrates having become independent, neither party until actually defeated had reason to be afraid. But after the victory of the year

'66, the whole Government was brought so completely under the control of the Medici, and so great had the authority of that house grown to be, that any who were dissatisfied with it were forced either to submit patiently to the new condition of things, or, if they sought to overthrow it, had to make their attempts secretly and by means of conspiracies, which, since they are attended by many difficulties, commonly bring ruin on those who engage in them, and add to the greatness of him against whom they are directed. Whence it comes that the Prince of a city who is conspired against, unless, which seldom happens, he be slain as was the Duke of Milan, ascends to still greater authority, and frequently from being good grows evil. For these attempts by their example give him cause for fear; fear makes him seek to secure himself; and the means he takes to this end lead him to acts of injustice, from which again result hatred and often his undoing. In this way these conspiracies are the cause of immediate ruin to him who sets them in motion, and in the course of time render him against whom they are contrived a worse man in all respects than before.

§ 2. Italy, as I have already shown, was divided into two camps; on one side were the Pope and the King of Naples, on the other the Venetians, the Duke of Milan, and the Florentines; and although the flames of war had not as yet broken out, every day added fuel to kindle them. The Pope more especially, in all he did, sought to give offence to the Government of Florence. Accordingly, on the death of Messer Filippo 1474.
de' Medici, Archbishop of Pisa, contrary to the wishes of the Florentine Signory, he appointed to the Arch-

bishopric Francesco Salviati, whom he knew to be hostile to the Medicean family. And as the Signory refused to give possession, there arose during the proceedings consequent on this affair new cause of quarrel between the Pope and the Florentine Government. In Rome, also, the Pope, while showing the greatest favour to the family of the Pazzi, lost no opportunity of disobliging that of the Medici. For wealth and descent, the Pazzi were at this time the most distinguished of all the Florentine families. The head of the house was Messer Jacopo, who in consideration of his riches and high birth had been made a knight by the people. Without children, save one illegitimate daughter of his own, he had many nephews, sons of his brothers Piero and Antonio; foremost among these were Guglielmo, Francesco, Rinato, and Giovanni, after whom came Andrea, Niccolò, and Galeotto.

Looking to the rank and wealth of the family, Cosimo de' Medici had given his granddaughter Bianca in marriage to Guglielmo de' Pazzi, in the hope that the alliance might draw the families closer together, and put an end to those jealousies and hatreds which for the most part originate in suspicion. But so fallible and uncertain are all human designs, that things fell out otherwise. The advisers of Lorenzo represented to him that it was most dangerous for himself and prejudicial to his authority, to allow wealth and power to combine in any one of his fellow-citizens. In consequence, Jacopo and his nephews were denied those honourable posts to which others thought them entitled. Whereupon the Pazzi began for the first time to feel resentment, the Medici to feel fear; the

one passion increasing with the other. Whence it came that in every matter wherein the Pazzi competed with other citizens, they were looked on with disfavour by the Magistrates. On some trifling occasion, and without being shown any of those marks of respect commonly used towards persons of high station, Francesco de' Pazzi, then residing in Rome, was compelled by the Magistracy of the Eight to come to Florence. In consequence, the Pazzi everywhere complained bitterly and resentfully of the slights they were receiving; but their complaints only increased suspicion in others, and brought further indignities on themselves. Giovanni de' Pazzi had to wife the daughter of Giovanni Buonromeo, a very wealthy citizen, whose property, on his death without male children, should have fallen to his daughter. Nevertheless, Carlo his nephew laid hands on a part of his estate, and, while the matter was under litigation, a law was passed whereby her father's inheritance was taken from the wife of Giovanni and made over to Carlo. This wrong the Pazzi recognised as wholly the work of the Medici. Indeed, on this point, Giuliano de' Medici often reproached his brother Lorenzo, saying that in grasping too much he feared they would lose all. Lorenzo, however, in the ardour of youth and power, must control everything, and have every one to recognise his authority as supreme.

§ 3. The Pazzi, who from their rank and wealth could not brook wrongs like these, now began to bethink them how they might revenge them. The first to weave designs against the Medici was Francesco, who being of a quicker temper and higher spirit than

the others, resolved to risk all he had to obtain what had been denied him. From his hatred of those who governed Florence he lived nearly always in Rome, where, after the custom of Florentine merchants, he lent out large sums of money at interest. And being on intimate terms with the Count Girolamo, these two would often complain one to the other of the Medici.

1478. After many conferences in which their grievances were discussed, they came to the conclusion that to enable the one to live securely in his territories, the other in his native city, it was necessary to change the Government of Florence, which they thought could only be effected by the death of Giuliano and Lorenzo. They thought also that both the Pope and the King would readily consent to this measure, were they shown how easily it might be accomplished. Following out these ideas they communicated the whole scheme to Francesco Salviati, the Archbishop of Pisa, who being ambitious, and having recently been offended by the Medici, readily agreed to take part in it. After discussing with one another how they should proceed, they decided that to insure the success of their scheme Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi must be prevailed upon to join them, for without him they thought that nothing was to be done. With this object it was settled that Francesco should repair to Florence, while the Archbishop and the Count remained in Rome, to be near the Pope whenever a fit occasion for making the matter known to him should present itself. Francesco found Messer Jacopo more restive and harder to persuade than he could have wished, and this being reported to Rome it was seen that to move Jacopo higher authority was needed. Whereupon the Count and the Arch-

bishop imparted the design to Giovan Battista of Montesecco, a Condottiere in the Pope's service. He, though reckoned a brave soldier, and though under obligation to both the Count and the Pope, objected to the scheme as at once difficult and dangerous. The Archbishop sought to remove his fears by showing him what assistance was to be looked for from the Pope and the King, the hatred in which the Medici were held by the people of Florence, the backing which the Pazzi and Salviati would receive from their kinsfolk, the ease wherewith the brothers might be slain as they walked unsuspecting and unattended through the streets, and the facility there would be, when they were put out of the way, to make a change in the Government. These assurances Giovan Battista did not wholly credit, having heard other Florentines speak very differently. 1478.

§ 4. While these matters were being discussed and considered in Rome, it happened that Carlo, Lord of Faenza, sickened so that his life was despaired of. The Archbishop and the Count thought this a suitable opportunity to send Giovan Battista to Florence and thence to Romagna, under colour of recovering certain towns which the Lord of Faenza had usurped. The Count therefore charged Giovan Battista to speak on his behalf with Lorenzo, and ask his advice as to how he should act in the affair of Romagna, and instructed him to confer afterwards with Francesco de' Pazzi, and consider with him how his kinsman Messer Jacopo might be induced to fall in with their wishes. And that the Pope's authority might be brought to bear on Messer Jacopo, it was contrived that before Giovan

1478. Battista left Rome he had audience with the Pope, who promised to render all the assistance in his power to promote the enterprise. On reaching Florence, Giovan Battista spoke with Lorenzo, by whom he was most courteously received, and wisely and kindly advised in the matter on which he sought counsel, and was amazed to find him, contrary to what he had been led to expect, most affable and prudent, and most friendly towards the Count. Nevertheless, he still desired to confer with Francesco, but learning that he had gone to Lucca, spoke with Messer Jacopo, whom at first he found much opposed to the plot, though before they separated somewhat shaken by the authority of the Pope. Jacopo accordingly advised Giovan Battista to proceed to Romagna, saying that when he came back Messer Francesco would have returned, and they could then discuss the matter more in detail. Giovan Battista thereupon went to Romagna, and on his return renewed his simulated consultations with Lorenzo concerning the Count's affairs. Afterwards he entered into close relations with Francesco de' Pazzi, with whose help he succeeded in persuading Messer Jacopo to join the conspiracy. They then discussed the manner in which it was to be carried out. Messer Jacopo thought that if both the brothers were in Florence the attempt could not succeed, and that therefore they should postpone its execution till Lorenzo had gone to Rome, as it was rumoured he intended doing. Francesco too would have preferred Lorenzo's absence, yet was of opinion that, should he not leave Florence, both brothers might be dealt with there on the occasion of a marriage feast, at some public spectacle, or in church. As regards aid from

without, he thought the Pope should assemble troops 1478.
for an attack on the fortress of Montone, which he had righteous cause for taking from Count Carlo in amends for the disturbances which, as I have already related, the latter had raised in the territories of Siena and Perugia. Nothing, however, was settled save that Francesco de' Pazzi and Giovan Battista should repair to Rome, and should there finally arrange everything in concert with Count Girolamo and the Pope. At Rome the matter was discussed afresh, and eventually it was determined that the attempt on Montone should be proceeded with; that Giovan Francesco of Tolentino, one of the Pope's Captains, should go to Romagna, and Messer Lorenzo da Castello to his own country, where each of them should strengthen his company, and hold himself ready to carry out all orders given by the Archbishop Salviati or by Francesco de' Pazzi. These last with Giovan Battista da Montesecco were to proceed to Florence, and there make all necessary arrangements for the execution of their design, in furtherance whereof King Ferrando, through his envoy, had promised his support. On their arrival in Florence the Archbishop and Francesco persuaded Jacopo, son of Messer Poggio Bracciolini, to join them, a learned young man, but ambitious and eager for change. They also gained over two members of the Salviati family both bearing the name of Jacopo, one the brother, the other a cousin of the Archbishop. They further secured the services of Bernardo Bandini and Napoleone Franzesi, high-spirited youths, and much attached to the house of Pazzi. Of strangers, besides those already named, Messer Antonio da Volterra took part in the conspiracy, as also a certain

1478. priest named Stefano employed in the house of Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi to teach his daughter Latin. But Rinato de' Pazzi, a grave and learned gentleman, who well understood the evils attending on such enterprises, would take no part in the plot, nay abhorred, and used every means he honourably could to hinder it.

§ 5. Raffaello di Riario, nephew of the Count Girolamo, had been sent by the Pope to study Canon Law at the University of Pisa, and while still residing there had been raised by his Holiness to the dignity of Cardinal. This Cardinal the conspirators determined to bring to Florence, for as they could conceal among his retinue those accomplices whose presence they needed, his coming would serve as a cloak to their designs and give opportunity for their execution. The Cardinal came accordingly, and was received by Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi at his villa at Montughi, near Florence. Through the Cardinal the conspirators thought to have Lorenzo and Giuliano brought together, and, as soon as they were together, to murder them. With this object, they contrived to have him invited by the brothers to a feast at their villa at Fiesole; but, whether by accident or purposely, Giuliano did not come, and consequently this scheme failed. They then bethought them that, were they to invite the Cardinal to a banquet in Florence, both brothers must certainly be present. This settled, they fixed Sunday the 26th April as the day for their banquet. Hoping to carry out their purpose during this entertainment, the conspirators met on the night of Saturday, and made all their arrangements for what was to be done

next day. But word being brought to Francesco on Sunday at daybreak that Giuliano was not coming to the banquet, the chief conspirators again assembled, and decided that there should be no further delay, for as the plot was known to many, it could not long escape discovery. Whereupon it was settled to slay the brothers in the Cathedral Church of Santa Reparata, for as the Cardinal was to be there, they too, in accordance with usage, might be expected to attend. It had been the intention of the conspirators that Giovan Battista should despatch Lorenzo, while Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini dealt with Giuliano; but Giovan Battista, whether his heart had been touched by his friendly intercourse with Lorenzo, or whether moved by other considerations, now refused the part assigned him, saying he durst not add sacrilege to treachery by perpetrating so great a crime in a church. This refusal led to the failure of the conspiracy; for, as time pressed, the business had to be committed to Messer Antonio da Volterra and the priest Stefano, neither of whom, by nature or by habit, was fitted for such an attempt. For if at any time coolness, courage, and resolution, bred by long experience in affairs of life and death, are needed, it is in an attempt like this, wherein we have often seen courage fail even in men practised in arms and tempered in blood. This arranged, it was agreed that the signal for action was to be the moment when the priest celebrating High Mass in the Cathedral should himself receive the Sacrament; and that meanwhile the Archbishop Salviati with his kinsmen, and with Jacopo, son of Messer Poggio, should seize on the Public Palace, so that as soon as the death of the two

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1478. young men was effected, the Signory might willingly or on compulsion declare in favour of the conspirators.

§ 6. These arrangements made, all repaired to the Cathedral, where the Cardinal and Lorenzo de' Medici had already come. The church was thronged with worshippers, the sacred service had begun, but Giuliano de' Medici had not yet arrived. Wherefore Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini, to whom his death had been entrusted, went to seek him at his house, and by wiles and entreaties brought him into the church. The coolness and constancy wherewith Francesco and Bernardo concealed their fierce hatred and cruel designs, deserve to be recorded. As they led Giuliano to the Cathedral, and even inside the church, they amused him with jokes and boyish pleasantries; nay, while feigning to caress him, Francesco, putting his arm round him, was able to ascertain whether he was protected by a shirt of mail or other like defence. Both Giuliano and Lorenzo were aware of the bitter hostility of the Pazzi towards them, and of their great desire to deprive them of their authority in the State, but had no fear for their lives, believing that were their enemies to make any attempt against them they would use constitutional means, but not resort to outrage. Accordingly, having no anxiety for their personal safety, they too feigned friendship.

The murderers being now in readiness, some by the side of Lorenzo, where by reason of the crowd in the church they could easily place themselves without incurring suspicion, others by the side of Giuliano, the destined moment came. With a short dagger, con-

trived for the purpose, Bernardo Bandini stabbed 1478.
Giuliano in the breast, who, after staggering a few steps, fell forward to the ground, when Francesco de' Pazzi, throwing himself upon him, covered him with wounds, striking so furiously that, blinded by passion, he gashed his own thigh. Meanwhile, Messer Antonio and Stefano set upon Lorenzo, but, though aiming many blows at him, only succeeded in wounding him slightly in the throat. For either from their awkwardness, or from the courage of Lorenzo, who seeing himself attacked defended himself with his sword, or else from his being protected by those with him, all their efforts were in vain. Whereupon losing heart they fled and hid themselves; but being soon discovered were put to a shameful death, and their bodies trailed through the streets.

Gathering his friends round him, Lorenzo shut himself up in the sacristy of the church. When Bernardo Bandini saw that Giuliano was dead, he slew also Francesco Neri, a staunch friend of the Medici, whether to satisfy an old grudge, or because Francesco had interposed in Giuliano's defence. And not content with two murders, he now ran to seek Lorenzo, in hopes that by courage and quickness he might still accomplish what the others from tardiness and weakness had left undone. In this, however, he was baffled when he found that Lorenzo had taken refuge in the sacristy. While these tragic and terrible deeds were being done, amid such an uproar that it seemed as though the Cathedral itself was falling in ruins, the Cardinal, who kept close to the altar, was with difficulty protected by the priests, until on the tumult subsiding the Signory was able to conduct him to the

Palace, where, till set at liberty, he remained in great fear for his life.

§ 7. In Florence at this time were certain men of Perugia who had been driven by the faction opposed to them from their native city. These the Pazzi had drawn into their schemes, by promising to restore them to their country. When Archbishop Salviati, accompanied by Jacopo, son of Messer Poggio, by his two kinsmen, and by other friends, went to seize the Palace, he took these men with him. On reaching the Palace he left some of his followers below, with directions that on hearing any disturbance they were to secure the doors. He then with most of the Perugians went upstairs, where, it being now late, he found the Signors were at table, but, after a short delay, he was admitted to audience with Cesare Petrucci, the Gonfalonier of Justice. Entering with a few of his followers, he left the rest outside, many of whom by their own inadvertence shut themselves up in the Chancery, the door of which was so contrived that when it closed it could not be opened, either from within or without, except by its key. Meanwhile the Archbishop, having gained entrance to the Gonfalonier by representing that he had matters to communicate on behalf of the Pope, began to address him in halting and confused words, and otherwise betrayed so much agitation both in his face and voice as to rouse the suspicions of the Gonfalonier, who, suddenly calling out, rushed from the room, and meeting Jacopo, son of Messer Poggio, seized him by the hair and gave him into the custody of his sergeants. The uproar reaching the Signors they armed themselves with such

weapons as chance supplied, and fell on those who had 1478.
come upstairs with the Archbishop (of whom some were locked in, the rest terrified), and either slew them on the spot, or threw them alive from the windows of the Palace. The Archbishop himself, with his two kinsmen, and Jacopo, son of Messer Poggio, they hanged. Meanwhile the men who had been left below in the court of the Palace had overpowered the Guard, closed the doors, and taken possession of the whole basement, so that the citizens who, on hearing the uproar, ran to the Palace, could not get entrance nor afford aid to the Signory, whether with arms or with counsel.

§ 8: Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini finding that Lorenzo had escaped, while of themselves he on whom all hopes of succeeding in the conspiracy rested was sorely wounded, were much cast down. Bernardo, however, using the same promptitude in his own behalf as he had shown in attacking the Medici, when he saw the game was up, saved himself by flight. Francesco, returning wounded to his house, tried to mount on horseback, for it had been settled that he was to ride round the town with his followers and call on the people to arm and be free. But his wound was deep, and he so faint from loss of blood, that he could not keep the saddle. Wherefore stripping off his clothes he threw himself naked on his bed, and besought Messer Jacopo to do for him what he could not do himself. Messer Jacopo, though stricken in years, and unpractised in such emergencies, as a last trial of their fortune, took horse with about a hundred armed followers who had been kept in readiness for

1478. some such attempt, and made for the Piazza of the Palace, shouting '*Liberty*' and calling on the people to aid him. But none answered to his call, for the ears of the people had been stopped by the prosperity and bounty of the Medici, and liberty was no longer known in Florence. The Priors, who held the upper part of the Palace, greeted him with stones, and did their utmost to daunt him by threats. While Messer Jacopo still hesitated, he was met by his brother-in-law, Giovanni Serristori, who, after reproaching him for the disorder his family had caused, exhorted him to return home, telling him that the people and liberty were as dear to other citizens as to him. Being now cut off from all hope, since the Palace was hostile, Lorenzo alive, Francesco wounded, and none had come forward to join him, Messer Jacopo, not knowing what else to do, decided to save if he could his life by flight, and with the followers he had with him in the Piazza, went forth from Florence designing to go to Romagna.

§ 9. By this time the whole town was in arms. Lorenzo de' Medici, with a large company of armed men, had withdrawn to his own house. The people had retaken the Palace, and slain or captured those who had seized it; the name of the Medici was shouted throughout the city; the limbs of the dead were shown transfixed on spears, or were trailed through the streets; while all with angry words or cruel deeds joined in hunting down the Pazzi. Their houses were now seized by the mob, and Francesco, dragged naked from his bed, was brought to the Palace of the Signory and hanged by the side of the Archbishop and

his companions. No insult done or spoken to him, 1478.
either while he passed through the streets or afterwards, moved him to utter a word; looking his tormentors steadfastly in the face, he sighed, but said nothing. Guglielmo de' Pazzi, as being guiltless, and at the entreaty of his wife Bianca, was sheltered in the house of Lorenzo, his brother-in-law. At this hour of trial there was no citizen but went, armed or unarmed, to Lorenzo's house to place life and fortune at his disposal; such felicity and favour had the family won by their prudence and generosity. At the time the attempt was made, Rinato de' Pazzi had withdrawn to his country-seat, whence, on hearing of what had happened, he sought to flee in disguise, but being recognised on the road, was taken and brought to Florence. Messer Jacopo, too, was captured in crossing the mountains; for the mountaineers, having heard of what had taken place in Florence, and seeing him trying to escape, attacked and led him back; nor could he by often renewed entreaties prevail upon them to slay him on the way. On the fifth day from the date of the outrage Messer Jacopo and Rinato were sentenced to death. Among the many executions carried out at this time, strewing the streets with corpses, there was none that excited the least pity except that of Rinato, he being accounted wise and good, and untainted by the pride of which the rest of his family were accused. And that no signal lesson might be wanting to the occasion, after Messer Jacopo had been laid in the tomb of his ancestors, he was dragged forth as one to whose remains such rites were denied, and buried by the town walls; from which resting-place he was again torn, and trailed naked by the

1478. halter wherewith he had been strangled through the whole city; after which, as though earth afforded no spot wherein he could repose, he was, by those who had dragged him, cast into the Arno, whose waters were then in flood. Strange example of the fickleness of Fortune, to see a man so rich and prosperous ruined, disgraced, and brought to this unhappy end! Certain of his vices are recorded, among others his passion for gaming, and his use of oaths too blasphemous for the veriest profligate. These vices he made up for by bountiful almsgiving, for he bestowed great sums on the needy and on charities. This, too, is to be said in his favour: on the day preceding the Sunday fixed for perpetrating the great crime, he paid all his debts and restored to the owners with marvellous exactitude all the merchandise he had of theirs, whether in bond or warehouse, that none might suffer through him should Fortune prove adverse.

Giovan Battista of Montesecco, after a prolonged examination, was beheaded; Napoleone Franzesi escaped a like punishment by flight. Guglielmo de' Pazzi was banished, and such of his cousins as were left alive were imprisoned in the dungeons of Volterra.

When all disturbances were ended, and the conspirators punished, the obsequies of Giuliano were celebrated. His funeral was attended by the tears of the whole city; for in him were united all the munificence and kindliness that could be desired in a man born to the highest fortune. He left a natural son, born a few months after his death, who received the name Giulio, and whose pre-eminent talents and virtues all the world in these days recognises, as shall, if God

grant me life, be amply shown when I come to speak of contemporary affairs. 1478.

The troops assembled in Val di Tevere under Messer Lorenzo da Castello, and in Romagna under Giovan Francesco da Tolentino, which had begun to move towards Florence to support the Pazzi, on hearing of the collapse of the conspiracy, retraced their steps.

§ 10. The overthrow of the Government of Florence not having been accomplished as the Pope and the King of Naples desired, these now resolved to effect by war what they could not by conspiracy, and each of them with all haste assembled troops for an attack on Florence, giving out that they asked nothing of the city but that it should rid itself of Lorenzo de' Medici, whom, alone of its citizens, they looked on as their enemy. The King's troops had now passed the Tronto; those of the Pope were in the Perugian territory; and that the Florentines might feel the wounds as well of his spiritual as of his temporal arms, the Pope excommunicated and cursed them.

On seeing these powerful armies coming against them, the Florentines prepared with all diligence for their defence. But inasmuch as the rumour had been spread that it was against him personally the war was directed, Lorenzo de' Medici determined first of all to assemble in the Palace, along with the Signors, citizens of good standing to the number of over three hundred, whom he addressed to this effect:—

'I know not, Honoured Signors and Worshipful Citizens, whether to mourn or to rejoice with you over

1478. what has happened. When I think of the treachery and hatred wherewith I have been attacked and my brother slain, I cannot but grieve and sorrow with all my heart and soul. But when afterwards I consider with what alacrity and zeal, with what love and unanimity on the part of the whole city, my brother has been avenged and I defended, I am moved not merely to rejoice, but to exult and glory in what has befallen. For if I have found that I have more enemies in this city than I had thought for, I have at the same time discovered that I have warmer and more devoted friends. I must lament, therefore, over the wrongs I have suffered from others, but rejoice in the favour shown me by you. What moves me most to lament the wrongs done me is that they are so strange, so unparalleled, and by me so little deserved. Think, Worshipful Citizens, to what a pass ill fortune has brought our House, when, in the midst of friends, of relatives, in the church itself, it found no safety. Those who are in fear of death are wont to turn for protection to their friends and kinsmen; but these we found armed for our destruction. All who either on public or private grounds are persecuted are wont to seek sanctuary in the churches; but we are slain by those by whom others are defended, and where even assassins and parricides are safe, the Medici have met their murderers. Yet God, who heretofore has never forsaken our House, has once more preserved us, and taken upon Himself the defence of the just cause. For what wrong have we ever done to any man that should kindle against us such fury for revenge? On those who have shown themselves so much our enemies, we have never, in truth, inflicted any private

injury; had we done so, scant opportunity would 1478.
have been left them to injure us. If they ascribe to us any public injuries they may have suffered, though what these are I know not, their offence is against you rather than against us, against the Palace and the majesty of this Government more than against the House of Medici, since they give it to be understood that on our account, and undeservedly, you wrong your fellow-citizens. This indeed is the very reverse of truth; for had it been in our power, and even had we desired to influence you to such a course, we never should have done so. For any one who diligently searches for the truth, will find that our House has always been exalted by you, with general consent and approval, for no other reason than that it has striven to conquer every one by kindliness, generosity, and beneficence; and if we have honoured even strangers, how should we wrong our own kith and kin? But if our enemies have been incited to act as they have done by their eagerness to rule, as their seizing on the Palace and coming armed into the Piazza demonstrate, the base and blameworthy character of their motive is by itself revealed and condemned. If they have acted from hatred to, or envy of our authority, it is not us they attack but you who gave us that authority. The authority men seize on for themselves does indeed merit hatred, but not that authority which they obtain through their generosity, kindliness, and munificence; and well you know that never has our House made one step to greatness to which it has not been invited by this Palace, and by the general voice. Not with arms nor by force did Cosimo, my grandsire, return from exile, but with your unanimous

1478. consent and approval; nor was it my father, old and infirm, who defended the State against so many enemies, but you by your authority and goodwill. On the death of my father, I myself, being still, as I may say, a child, could not but for your counsels and support have maintained the standing of my House; nor since then could, or can, my House rule this Republic without your co-operation. I know not therefore what ground for hatred, or what just cause for envy, they should have against us. Let them rather turn their hatred against those ancestors of theirs whose pride and greed deprived them of that reputation which ours, by far other methods, knew how to secure. But assuming the wrongs we have done them to be great, and that they have good reason to desire our destruction, why come to attack the Palace? Why league themselves with the Pope and King against the liberty of this commonwealth? Why disturb the prolonged peace of Italy? For all this they are without excuse, since they should injure those only who have injured them, and not mix up private enmities with public wrongs, with the result that though they themselves are crushed, our troubles are graver than ever, for it is on their account that Pope and King are coming to assail us in arms But this war, they say, is made against me and my House. Would to God that were true! for then the remedy were at hand and certain, nor would I be found so worthless a citizen as to think more of my own safety than of your danger. Nay, willingly would I extinguish the public conflagration with my private ruin. But the iniquities of the great are ever veiled under some less unworthy pretext, and this is the way they take to hide their dishonest

ends. Should you, however, judge otherwise, I am in your hands. It lies with you to support me or to throw me over. You are my fathers and protectors; what you require me to do, I shall always do willingly; nor, should it seem good to you, will I refuse to quench with my own blood this war begun in my brother's.' 1478.

While Lorenzo spoke the citizens could not restrain their tears, and with the same emotion he had been listened to, one of them, put forward by the rest, made answer, saying, 'that the city knew what it owed to him and his, and that he might be of good heart, for with the same readiness wherewith they had preserved his life and avenged his brother's death, they would likewise maintain his credit and authority, which he should never lose till they had lost their country.' And that deeds might answer to words, they at once provided him with a guard of armed men numerous enough to defend him from all plots within the city.

§ 11. They then prepared for war, assembling troops, and raising what money they could. On the strength of their league with the Duke of Milan and the Venetians, they applied to both for assistance. And since the Pope had shown himself a wolf rather than a shepherd, to escape being devoured as wrong-doers, they did their best to justify themselves against him, filling all Italy with tales of his treachery to their State; setting forth his impiety and injustice, and the shameful way in which he had exercised his ill-gotten Papacy in sending those whom he had advanced to the highest dignities of the Church, in the company of traitors and parricides, to commit foul outrage in

1478. the temple of God, during divine worship and the celebration of the Sacrament; and how having failed to murder the citizens, overthrow the Government, and sack the city, as in his heart he desired, he had placed Florence under interdict, and menaced and insulted her with pontifical maledictions. If God was just, and hated iniquity, He must be offended by this conduct of His vicar, and must be well pleased that those injured, finding no redress elsewhere, should appeal directly to Him. So far therefore from accepting, or rendering obedience to the Papal interdict, the Florentines compelled the priests to celebrate the Divine Offices, assembled in Florence a Council of all the Tuscan Prelates subject to their authority, and therein made appeal to a future Council of the Church against the wrongs done them by the Pope.

Nor was the Pope at a loss for reasons to justify his conduct; alleging that it was the office of the Pontificate to crush tyrants, to depress the wicked and exalt the good, and use all fit measures to these ends. But assuredly it never lay with secular Princes to hold Cardinals prisoners, to hang Bishops, to slay, dismember, and drag about Priests, slaughtering without distinction the innocent with the guilty.

§ 12. Nevertheless, while these complaints and recriminations were being interchanged, the Florentines surrendered the Cardinal, whom they had been keeping prisoner, into the hands of the Pope, who, thereupon, without more ado, attacked them with all his own forces combined with the King's. The two armies under Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, eldest son of Ferrando, but led by Federigo, Count of Urbino, entered

Chianti through the territory of the Sienese, who sided with our enemies, seized on Radda and other strongholds, and after ravaging the whole country, proceeded to besiege Castellina. On witnessing these hostilities the Florentines were much alarmed, being still without troops and finding their friends slow to render aid; for although the Duke had sent succour, the Venetians disclaimed all obligation to take part in disputes of a private character, maintaining that as this war was undertaken against individuals, it was no duty of theirs to afford help, since private enmities afforded no ground for public interference. To dispose the Venetians to a better frame of mind, the Florentines sent Messer Tommaso Soderini as envoy to their Senate, and in the meanwhile hired troops, and appointed Ercole, Marquis of Ferrara, Captain of their armies. While these preparations were being made, the enemy had invested Castellina so closely, that the townsmen, after standing siege for forty days, despaired of relief, and surrendered. From Castellina the enemy moved towards Arezzo, and laid siege to Monte San Savino. The Florentine army had now been got together, and approaching the enemy had encamped within three miles of them, giving them so much annoyance that Federigo of Urbino was fain to ask a truce for some days. This was granted by the Florentines so greatly to their own disadvantage, that those who asked it were astonished at obtaining it, since they must have retreated with discredit had it been refused. But availing themselves of these few days of leisure to put themselves in order, the enemy, when the term of the truce expired, carried the fortress before the eyes of our soldiers. The season, however, being now ad- 1478.

1478. vanced, the enemy withdrew into the Sienese territory to seek suitable winter lodging. The Florentines also retired to more commodious quarters, and the Marquis of Ferrara, having gained small advantage for himself and still less for others, went back to his own Lordship.

§ 13. At this time Genoa rebelled against the rule of Milan, for the following reasons:—After Galeazzo was murdered, his son, Gian Galeazzo, being from his tender age unfit to govern, a contention arose between Madonna Bona, his mother, and his uncles Sforza, Lodovico, Ottaviano, and Ascanio, each desiring to have charge of the little Duke. In this contest Madonna Bona, the Dowager Duchess, guided by the counsels of Messer Tommaso Soderini, then Florentine envoy to the State of Milan, and of Cecco Simonetta, who had been secretary to Galeazzo, prevailed, whereupon the Sforza uncles fled from Milan. Ottaviano was drowned in crossing the Adda; the others, and with them Ruberto da San Severino, who in the course of these disputes had deserted the Duchess and sided with her opponents, were sentenced to banishment. The disturbances in Tuscany breaking out soon after, these Lords, in hopes to find opportunities in the new state of affairs, left their places of exile, and each of them made fresh efforts to regain his position. King Ferrando noting that the only succour the Florentines had received in their necessities was from the State of Milan, in order to deprive them of this also, determined to give the Duchess so much to think of at home as should prevent her from sending further aid. Accordingly, through the agency of Prospero

Adorno, Signor Ruberto, and the banished Sforzas, he caused Genoa to rise in revolt against the Duke. The Castelletto, however, held out, and resting her hopes on this, the Duchess sent a strong force to recover the city. But this attempt failed, and seeing the dangers that menaced herself and her son if the struggle continued, since Tuscany was in great disorder, and the Florentines, to whom alone she trusted, in sore distress, she now resolved that as she could not have Genoa for her subject, she should have it as her friend, and arranged with Battistino Fregoso, the enemy of Prospero Adorno, to hand over the Castelletto to him and make him supreme in Genoa, on his undertaking to drive out Prospero, and show no favour to the Sforza exiles. Which being agreed to, Battistino, with the support of the Castelletto and of his own faction, got the upper hand in Genoa, and according to the custom of the city was made its Doge. The Sforzas and Signor Ruberto being thus expelled from the Genoese territory, came with their followers into Lunigiana; whereupon the Pope and King, perceiving that the troubles of Lombardy were quieted, decided to make use of those men who had been driven from Genoa to disturb Tuscany on the side of Pisa, so as to weaken the Florentines by compelling them to divide their forces. Wherefore, winter being now past, they persuaded Signor Ruberto to leave Lunigiana with his followers and invade the Pisan territory. He accordingly made a vigorous inroad into that country, took and sacked many villages, and carried devastation to the very gates of Pisa. 1478. 1479.

§ 14. At this time ambassadors to the Pope from

1479. the Emperor, the King of France, and the King of Hungary, coming to Florence, urged the Florentines also to send envoys to Rome, promising their best endeavours to persuade Pope Sixtus to terminate the war by an advantageous peace. The Florentines, who themselves desired peace, and were eager to clear themselves before every one of the charges brought against them, agreed to try this course. Envoys were sent, but returned without concluding any settlement.

Being thus either attacked or deserted by the other Italian States, the Florentines now sought to improve their credit by entering into relations with the King of France, to whom they sent as their envoy Donato Acciaiuoli, a devoted student of Greek and Latin literature, whose ancestors had always held high offices in Florence. On his way to France, Donato died at Milan. To honour his memory, and solace those whom he left behind, his country buried him nobly at the public charge, exempted his sons from all public burdens, and bestowed upon his daughters such dowers as would enable them to marry. Messer Guid' Antonio Vespucci, a man well versed both in civil and canon law, was sent in his place as envoy to the King.

The attack by Signor Ruberto on the Pisan territory, coming on the Florentines unexpectedly, naturally caused them much alarm, for having already on their hands a most serious war on the side of Siena, they were at a loss to provide for the defence of the parts toward Pisa. Nevertheless, by raising forced levies and other like measures, they contrived to give Pisa some assistance. To insure the fidelity of the citizens of Lucca, and prevent their supplying the enemy with money or victuals, they sent thither as their envoy

Piero, grandson of Neri Capponi, who, owing to the hatred wherein, by reason of old wrongs and perpetual fears, that city holds the Florentine name, was received with such distrust that he was often in danger of being murdered by the populace; so that his embassy rather gave occasion for renewed resentment than for any increase of cordiality. 1479.

The Florentines now recalled to their service the Marquis of Ferrara, took the Marquis of Mantua into their pay, and urgently besought the Venetians to send them Braccio's son, Count Carlo, and Deifebo, son of Count Jacopo. To this request, after much cavilling, the Venetians consented. For as they had now made a truce with the Turk, and consequently had no longer any good excuse to offer, they felt ashamed not to fulfil their obligations to the league. Accordingly, Count Carlo and Deifebo came with a fair number of men-at-arms, and joining to these as many more as they could detach from the army which under the Marquis of Ferrara was opposing the Duke of Calabria, marched towards Pisa to encounter Signor Ruberto who lay with his forces near the river Serchio. He, though he had feigned willingness to await attack, did not do so, but retreated to the quarters in Lunigiana which he had occupied before his inroad into the Pisan territory. After his departure all the towns taken by the enemy in the territory of Pisa were recovered by Count Carlo.

§ 15. Freed from attacks on the side of Pisa, the Florentines concentrated all their forces between Colle and San Gimignano. But inasmuch as on the arrival of Count Carlo, followers of the factions of both

1479. Braccio and Sforza were now present in the camp, their old feud at once revived, and it was seen that should they remain long together they must come to blows. Wherefore, as a less evil, it was decided to divide the army, sending one division under Count Carlo into the Perugian country, and posting the other at Poggibonsi, where, entrenching itself strongly, it might prevent the enemy from entering the Florentine territory. It was thought that by taking this course the enemy also would be compelled to divide his forces; for it was expected either that Count Carlo would carry Perugia, where the Florentines believed they had many partisans, unopposed, or that the Pope would be obliged to send there a large force for its defence. It was further decided that to add to the Pope's difficulties, Messer Niccolò Vitelli, who had been driven out of Città di Castello, where his enemy, Messer Lorenzo, was now Governor, should bring troops into the neighbourhood, and try to expel his rival, and withdraw the town from its allegiance to the Church. It seemed at first as though Fortune were disposed to favour the Florentine cause; for Count Carlo was seen to be making great progress in the Perugian country; Messer Niccolò Vitelli, though he did not succeed in entering Città di Castello, had the advantage in the open field, and raided round the town without check or hindrance; while the troops left at Poggibonsi made similar daily incursions as far as the walls of Siena. But the expectations thus raised were disappointed. When his hopes were at the highest, Count Carlo died, an event that might have turned to the advantage of the Florentines, had they known to use the victory

which followed upon it. For on hearing that the 1479.
Count was dead, the Papal troops, who were now all gathered together at Perugia, fired with hopes of vanquishing their adversaries, marched out into the open country, and pitched their camp by the lake of Thrasymene, three miles from the Florentine forces. The reason of this confident bearing being understood, Jacopo Guicciardini, the Commissary of the Florentine army, after taking counsel with Ruberto Malatesta of Rimini, who on Count Carlo's death remained our foremost and most approved Captain, decided to await the enemy's attack. Coming to an engagement on the bank of the lake, at the same spot where Hannibal the Carthaginian gave the Romans a memorable defeat, the troops of the Church were routed. This victory was received in Florence with praise by her rulers, and with satisfaction by every one; and the campaign might have ended honourably and profitably had not the disputes which broke out in the army at Poggibonsi thrown everything into confusion, the good effected by one division of the army being utterly undone by the other. For in dividing the spoil taken by the troops in the Sienese territory, a quarrel arose between the Marquis of Ferrara and the Marquis of Mantua, who, resorting to arms, did their utmost to injure one another, bringing things to such a pass that the Florentines saw they could no longer have the services of both, and consented to the Marquis of Ferrara returning home with his soldiers.

§ 16. Perceiving the Florentine army thus weakened, left without a leader, and fallen into complete disorder,

1479. the Duke of Calabria, who lay with his forces near Siena, was encouraged to engage it, and at once marched to the attack. Whereupon the Florentines, trusting neither to their arms, nor to their number, though in this respect superior to the enemy, nor to their position, which was extremely strong, without waiting to look their enemy in the face, fled on the mere sight of the dust they raised, leaving behind them their ammunition, baggage-wagons, and artillery; for such were the poltroonery and disorder prevailing in the armies of those times, that victory or defeat might depend on whether a horse was seen to be turned this way or that. This rout yielded much spoil to the King's soldiers, and filled the Florentines with consternation; for Florence was now suffering not only from the calamities of war, but also from a cruel pestilence which had laid such hold on the city that to escape death all the citizens had withdrawn to their country-seats. And this made the affair still more alarming; for those citizens who had possessions in the Val di Pesa or in the Val d'Elsa, and had sought refuge there, when the rout took place at once fled as best they could to Florence, carrying with them not only their children and chattels, but even their farm-labourers; thus betraying their fear that at any moment the enemy might present himself before the town.

On witnessing this general panic, those to whom the conduct of the war was entrusted issued orders to the troops who had been fighting successfully in the Perugian territory to abandon the enterprise against Perugia, and hasten to the Val d'Elsa, where the enemy, after their victory, were laying waste the

country without opposition. For although these troops had invested the city of Perugia so closely that it might be expected at any moment to fall into their hands, nevertheless the Florentines were minded rather to defend what was their own than to seize what was another's. This division of the army was accordingly withdrawn from the field of its victories, and led to San Casciano, a village distant about eight miles from Florence, where it was thought a stand might be made until such time as the remnants of the routed army could be brought together. The enemy's forces at Perugia, being set free by the departure of the Florentine troops, now grew bolder, and gathered daily a rich spoil in the territories of Arezzo and Cortona; while those who under the Duke of Calabria had prevailed at Poggibonsi, made themselves masters first of that town, next of Vico, then of Certaldo, and after storming and sacking those places, encamped against the fortress of Colle, which was considered in those days to be immensely strong, and, as its inhabitants were loyal to the Government of Florence, was expected to keep the enemy at bay till the Florentine forces were reunited. Accordingly, while the enemy were putting forth their whole strength to besiege Colle, the Florentines, after concentrating their troops at San Casciano, decided to advance nearer to their opponents, that their proximity might at once encourage the men of Colle to defend themselves, and render the besiegers less daring in their attacks. Having thus resolved they shifted their camp from San Casciano to San Gimignano, distant five miles from Colle, whence they continually harassed the Duke's camp with their light horsemen and light 1479.

1479. infantry. This succour, however, was not enough to relieve the men of Colle, who, on their supplies becoming exhausted, surrendered on the 13th November, to the great vexation of the Florentines and the extreme joy of their enemies, more especially of the Sienese, who, besides the general hatred they bear the city of Florence, entertain a special grudge against the men of Colle.

§ 17. Winter had now set in, and the season being unsuitable for warfare, the Pope and King, whether to excite hopes of peace, or to enjoy more at their ease the victories they had obtained, offered the Florentines a truce for three months, allowing them ten days to make answer. The offer was at once accepted. But as wounds always smart more after the blood cools than at the time they are inflicted, this brief repose made the Florentines more sensible how gravely they had suffered. The citizens now openly and without reserve reproached one another, denouncing the blunders that had been made during the war, the money wasted, the burdens unfairly imposed; all which matters were freely discussed not only by private men in their ordinary intercourse, but even in the public Councils. Nay, one man was bold enough to tell Lorenzo de' Medici to his face that the city was exhausted and would have no more war, and that, therefore, it behoved him to bring about a peace. Recognising this necessity, Lorenzo took counsel with those of his friends whom he thought most faithful and most prudent; who seeing the Venetians lukewarm and little to be trusted, the Duke an infant, and entangled in civil dissensions,

were agreed that to better their fortunes they must look for new friends. They were at a loss, however, to decide into whose arms, whether the Pope's or the King's, they should throw themselves. But after considering everything they were disposed to court the friendship of the King as more secure and stable. For from the brief duration of the lives of the Popes, the uncertainty as to their succession, the small regard the Church has for Princes, and the unscrupulous methods she follows, it results that a secular Prince can never wholly trust a Pope, nor with safety join fortunes with him. For whoso shares the wars and dangers of a Pope will have him as his companion in victories, but will stand alone in reverses, since the Pope will always be upheld and defended by his spiritual authority and prestige. Having therefore decided that it would be more advantageous to gain the friendship of the King, Lorenzo's advisers were of opinion that this could not be better done, nor with more assurance of success, than by his going in person to the Court of Naples; for they thought that the more they showed frank confidence in this King, the more likely were they to find a cure for past enmities. 1479.

Having made up his mind to undertake this mission, Lorenzo confided the city and the Government to the charge of Messer Tommaso Soderini, then Gonfalonier of Justice, and leaving Florence in the beginning of December, on reaching Pisa wrote to the Signory the reasons for his departure. Whereupon the Signors, to do him honour, and give him greater weight in treating with the King for peace, appointed him ambassador on behalf of the Florentine people, and authorised him

1479. to enter into a league with the King on whatever terms he thought best for the Republic.

§ 18. At this very time Signor Ruberto of San Severino, together with Lodovico and Ascanio Sforza, for Sforza their brother was now dead, renewed their attempts against the State of Milan, with a view to get the Government again into their hands. They seized Tortona, and as Milan and the whole country were in arms, Duchess Bona was advised to recall the Sforza brothers from exile, admit them to a share in the Government, and so put an end to all civil dissension. This advice originated with Antonio Tassino of Ferrara, a man of low birth, who coming to Milan had been taken up by Duke Galeazzo, and by him handed over to his wife, the Duchess, as her chamberlain. After the death of the Duke, Tassino, whether for his handsome person, or for other undisclosed merits, rose to such favour with Madonna Bona that he almost governed the country. This gave great offence to Messer Cecco, who, being a person of admirable prudence and of long experience in State affairs, did what he could to lessen his influence both with the Duchess and with the other members of the Government. Tassino, knowing this, in order to revenge the slights put upon him, and have some one at hand to protect him from Messer Cecco, exhorted the Duchess to bring back the Sforzeschi; which advice, without consulting Messer Cecco, she followed. Whereupon Messer Cecco said to her, 'Thou hast taken a course that will cost me my life, and thee thy State.' A prediction soon after verified; for Messer Cecco was put to death by Signor Lodovico, and a

little later, on Tassino being expelled from the Duchy, 1479.
the Duchess took it so much to heart that she quitted Milan, and surrendered the charge of her son into the hands of Lodovico, who remaining sole governor of the Duchy, was, as shall presently be shown, the cause of the ruin of Italy.

Lorenzo de' Medici had departed on his journey to Naples, and the truce between the belligerents was still in force, when, to the surprise of every one, Lodovico Fregoso, having a secret understanding with certain of the inhabitants of Sarzana, privily entered that town with a company of armed followers, and taking possession of it, made the Florentine Governor his prisoner. This gave great offence to the heads of the Government in Florence, who persuaded themselves that what had happened had been done by order of King Ferrando, and complained to the Duke of Calabria, who was with his army at Siena, of having sprung a new war upon them during the continuance of the truce. He, however, both by letters and by envoys, strenuously denied that either he or his father had consented to what had been done. Nevertheless it was clear to the Florentines that they were in a perilous plight, since their treasury was empty, the Chief of their Commonwealth in the hands of King Ferrando, the old war against King and Pope still open, and a new war with the Genoese broken out; at the same time they themselves were friendless, since nothing was to be hoped from the Venetians, while from the Government of Milan, owing to its uncertainty and instability, there was less to hope than to fear. The only safety left them lay in what Lorenzo de' Medici might arrange with the King.

1480. § 19. Lorenzo was now come by sea to Naples, where he was received honourably, not by the King only, but by the whole city, which looked for great results from his visit. For whereas this momentous war had been begun with the sole object of crushing him, his reputation had been enhanced by the greatness of the enemies with whom he had to contend. But when he came into the King's presence, and spoke of the state of affairs in Italy, of the humours of its Princes and Peoples, of what might be hoped from peace and feared from war, the King on hearing him was even more astonished by the loftiness of his spirit, the acuteness of his intellect, and the solidity of his judgment, than before at his being able to sustain alone so great a war. Accordingly he redoubled the attentions he had shown him, and began to think it might be wiser to allow him to depart as a friend than to detain him as an enemy. Nevertheless he induced him on various pretexts to prolong his stay from December to March, that he might have a fuller understanding not only of the man himself, but also of his city. For in Florence there were not wanting enemies of Lorenzo who would have rejoiced had the King detained him and treated him as he had treated Jacopo Piccinino, and who spoke of him throughout the city with feigned commiseration, while in the public Councils they opposed all measures favourable to him. By which methods they contrived to raise a rumour that were the King to detain Lorenzo long in Naples, the Government of Florence would be changed. This it was that led the King to delay Lorenzo's departure, for he waited to see whether any disturbance would break out in Florence. But finding

that all went on quietly, on the 6th day of March 1479 he allowed him to go, having first won his regard by every sort of kindness and sign of affection, and entered into a perpetual treaty with him for the maintenance of their common interests. 1480.

If Lorenzo was great when he left Florence, he came back to it infinitely greater, and was welcomed by the city with such rejoicings as his noble qualities and recent services merited, for he had risked his life to restore peace to his country. Two days after his return, the treaty made between the Republic of Florence and the King was published, whereby it was covenanted that both parties should make common cause for the defence of their States; that the towns taken from the Florentines in the recent war should be restored at the King's pleasure; that the members of the Pazzi family who were confined in the dungeons of Volterra, should be set free; and that for a period named a fixed sum of money should be paid to the Duke of Calabria.

On the publication of this treaty the Pope and the Venetians were mightily displeased, the Pope thinking himself slighted by the King, the Venetians by the Florentines; for as both powers had taken part in the war, they were offended at not being included in the peace. This being reported and believed in Florence, soon led every one to suspect that an even greater war would follow from the peace just concluded. Wherefore the chiefs of the State resolved to restrict the Government within narrower limits, and bring the consideration of important business before a less number of persons. They accordingly created a Council of seventy citizens, with the fullest powers

1480. that could be conferred, to deal with all affairs of moment. This new body quelled the courage of those who might have sought to introduce changes. To make its importance recognised, its first acts were to confirm the treaty made between Lorenzo and the King, and to appoint envoys to the Pope, on which mission Antonio Ridolfi and Piero Nasi were sent. Howbeit the Duke of Calabria, notwithstanding the terms of the treaty, did not withdraw his army from Siena, alleging that he was detained by the disputes of the citizens, which indeed were so serious that though hitherto he had been lodged outside the walls, he was now brought inside and made arbiter of their differences. Availing himself of this opportunity, the Duke punished many of the Sienese citizens by fines, condemned many to prison, many to exile, and some he put to death; in consequence of which severities he became suspected, not by the Sienese only, but also by the Florentines, of desiring to make himself Lord of Siena. Yet no remedy could be devised, since the alliance of Florence with the King was new, and both the Pope and the Venetians were hostile. This suspicion was manifested not merely by the Florentine people at large, shrewd interpreters of passing events, but also by the rulers of the State themselves; and all are agreed that never was our city in such danger of losing her freedom. But God, who in like extremities has always guarded her with special care, caused an unlooked-for event to happen which gave the Pope, the King, and the Venetians more urgent matters to think of than the affairs of Tuscany.

§ 20. Mahomet, the Grand Turk, had gone with a vast

army to Rhodes, and had besieged it for many months ; 1480.
but though his forces were great, and his obstinacy in pressing the siege extraordinary, he found the besieged still more stubborn, defending themselves so resolutely against his furious assaults that in the end he was compelled to raise the siege with discredit. A division of his fleet sailed from Rhodes for Alvona under Achmet Pasha, who, while coasting along the shores of Italy, whether on seeing how easily a blow might be struck, or because he had his master's orders to make the attempt, suddenly landed a force of four thousand soldiers, and assailing the town of Otranto, stormed and sacked it, putting all its inhabitants to the sword. Afterwards he fortified both the town and harbour as best he could, and getting together a strong body of horsemen, raided and plundered the country round about. King Ferrando hearing of this attack, and knowing how mighty a prince was engaged in it, sent messengers everywhere to spread the tidings and to demand aid against the common enemy, and with extreme urgency recalled the Duke of Calabria with his troops from Siena.

§ 21. This mishap, in proportion as it alarmed the Duke and the other powers of Italy, gave delight to Florence and Siena, the former city thinking she thereby escaped dangers menacing her liberty, the latter that her liberty was recovered; and these impressions were strengthened by the lamentations of the Duke on leaving Siena, accusing Fortune of having by an unforeseen and unlikely interference robbed him of the sovereignty of Tuscany. It also caused the Pope to alter his counsels, for whereas before he had

1480. refused to listen to any Florentine envoy, he now so far relented as to be willing to hear any one who spoke to him of a general peace, thus giving the Florentines to understand that when they were disposed to sue for pardon they would obtain it. Thinking this an opportunity not to be neglected, they sent twelve envoys to Rome. On their arrival the Pope interposed many delays before granting them audience. At last, however, the terms on which they were henceforth to live with one another, how much each was to contribute in peace, and how much in war, being settled, the envoys came to the feet of the Pope, who, sitting surrounded by his Cardinals, awaited them with excessive pomp. They excused what had happened, now pleading that they had no alternative, now throwing the blame on the malignity of others, again alleging the popular fury and just cause for anger. They deplored the cruel fate of those who must either fight or die, and said that since everything has to be borne in order to escape death, they had endured war, interdicts, and all the other hardships which recent events had brought in their train, to save their Republic from servitude, which is wont to be the death of free cities. If, however, they had done aught amiss, even though it had been done of necessity, they were ready to make amends, and trusted that in his clemency, and following the example of our blessed Redeemer, His Holiness would consent to receive them in his most merciful arms. To which pleadings the Pope replied in words full of pride and wrath, rebuking them for all that in times past they had done against the Church; but said that in observance of the Divine precepts he was content to

grant them the pardon they sought. But he would 1480.
have them know they must obey him, and that any further breach of obedience on their part would bring upon them the loss of that liberty they had been on the point of losing, and had justly forfeited. For those alone deserved to be free who busied themselves with good and not with evil deeds, whereas freedom turned to ill uses injures both itself and others. To value God little and the Church less, was the conduct not of a freeman but of a profligate, and of one inclined to evil rather than good, and the correction of such an offender belonged not to Princes only, but to every Christian. For what had happened they must blame those who by their evil deeds had begun, and by deeds still worse had continued the war, which had come to an end rather from the indulgence of others than through any merit of their own. The formula of accord and of benediction was then read, to which the Pope, going beyond what had been before discussed and agreed to, added that if the Florentines desired to enjoy the fruits of his benediction, they must maintain fifteen galleys, equipped at their cost, during the whole time the Turk was making war on the Kingdom of Naples. The envoys were greatly annoyed by the burden thus superimposed on the terms of the accord, yet neither through any mediation or interest, nor by any remonstrances, could they obtain relief. On their return to Florence, however, the Signory, in order to conclude the treaty, sent Messer Guid' Antonio Vespucci, who a short time before had come back from France, as ambassador to the Pope. He by his prudence put everything on a more reasonable footing, and obtained many favours from the

1480. Pope, which might be taken as a sign of improved relations.

§ 22. Differences with the Pope being composed, Siena set free, and they themselves relieved from their fears of the King by the departure of the Duke of Calabria from Tuscany, the Florentines, while the war with the Turks was still pending, began to importune the King to restore those towns of theirs which the Duke on his recall had left in the hands of the Sienese. This made the King suspect that the Florentines meant to fall away from him in his extreme need, and by moving war against the Sienese cut off the aid he counted on obtaining from the Pope and other Italian powers. He therefore consented that these towns should be restored, and renewed his alliance with the Florentines on new terms. Whence it is seen that it is force and necessity, not written covenants and conditions, that compel Princes to keep faith. On these towns being restored and this new alliance concluded, Lorenzo de' Medici recovered the credit which had been impaired, first by the war, afterwards, while the King was distrusted, by the peace. For in the meanwhile there had not been wanting persons who were open-mouthed against him, saying that to save himself he had sold his country, and that as in war they had lost their towns, so in peace they would lose their liberty. But when the towns were restored, and an honourable accord made with the King, and when the city had recovered her old prestige, the people of Florence, who love to talk, and who judge measures by their success rather than by their wisdom, altered their tone, extolling Lorenzo

to the skies, and declaring that his prudence had known how to regain in peace what the malice of Fortune had taken from him in war, and that he had accomplished more by his sagacity and judgment than his enemies by arms and violence. 1480-1.

The war threatened in consequence of the displeasure of the Pope and the Venetians with the treaty between Florence and Naples, had been staved off by the inroad of the Turks. This attack, coming by surprise, had at first been the occasion of much good, but terminating afterwards equally unexpectedly, caused much mischief. For Mahomet, the Grand Turk, dying suddenly, and quarrels breaking out between his sons, the Turkish troops who found themselves abandoned in Apulia by their master, surrendered Otranto on terms to the King of Naples. The apprehensions which had kept the minds of the Pope and the Venetians in check were thus removed, and all stood in expectation of some new outbreak. On one side was the league of the Pope and the Venetians, with whom were joined the Genoese, the Sienese, and other lesser powers. Against them were the Florentines, the King of Naples, and the Duke of Milan, with whom Bologna and many other Lords took part. The aim of the Venetians was to make themselves masters of Ferrara, an enterprise which they considered they entered on with just cause, and certain assurance of success. The dispute was this. The Marquis had declared himself no longer bound to accept the Governor, or take the salt sent from Venice, it having been stipulated by treaty that after seventy years Ferrara was to be free of both obligations. To which the Venetians replied that so long as he retained

1481-2. the Polesine he must receive their Governor and take their salt. The Marquis not consenting to this, the Venetians held they had good grounds for arming against him, and when they saw the Pope burning with resentment against the Florentines and the King, they thought they had found suitable opportunity. But to ingratiate themselves still more with the Pope, on his nephew, Count Girolamo, coming to Venice they received him with the highest honours, presented him with the freedom of the city, and enrolled him among their nobility, this last mark of distinction being always reckoned the greatest they can confer on any one. In preparation for this war they had imposed new taxes, and as Captain General of their armies had appointed Ruberto of Sanseverino, who, having quarrelled with Lodovico Sforza, Governor of Milan, had fled to Tortona, and after raising disturbances there, had gone to Genoa, where he was staying when summoned by the Venetians and given the command of their forces.

§ 23. These preparations for new movements coming to the knowledge of the hostile League, caused it also to prepare for war. The Duke of Milan chose Federigo, Lord of Urbino, for his Captain; the Florentines, Costanzo Sforza, Lord of Pesaro; while to sound the mind of the Pope, and ascertain whether the Venetians were moving war against Ferrara with his approval, King Ferrando sent the Duke of Calabria with his army to the river Tronto, and asked the Pope's leave to pass into Lombardy to succour the Marquis; a request which was flatly refused. Whereupon the King and the Florentines, thinking they had clear proof of

the Pope's intentions, decided to use force against him, 1482.
and either compel him to become their friend, or at any rate throw so many obstacles in his way as should disable him from aiding the Venetians, who were already in the field and making war on the Marquis, raiding his country and laying siege to Ficcarolo, a stronghold of great importance to the security of his dominions.

An attack upon the Pope being therefore agreed on between the King and the Florentines, the Duke of Calabria marched hurriedly towards Rome, and with the help of the Colonnesi, who joined him because the Orsini had sided with Sixtus, laid waste the country, while the Florentines, under Messer Niccolò Vitelli, stormed and took possession of Città di Castello, driving out Lorenzo, who held it for the Church, and setting up Messer Niccolò as its Lord. The Pope thus found himself sorely beset, Rome being torn by factions within, while, without, the country was overrun by enemies. Nevertheless, like a man of spirit, resolved to conquer and not to yield, he engaged Ruberto Malatesta of Rimini as his Captain, and bringing him to Rome, where the whole of the Papal troops were gathered, put before him how glorious it would be for him if, matched against the might of a King, he were to rescue the Church from the perils in which she stood; and that not only he (Sixtus), but all his successors, would recognise the obligation, and not men merely, but God himself, would be willing to requite it. After inspecting the Papal forces and their equipment, Ruberto urged the Pope to raise as many foot-soldiers as he could, advice which was followed with the utmost zeal and despatch. The Duke of

1482. Calabria was now near Rome, and every day ravaged and raided to its very gates. This so exasperated the Romans that many volunteered to serve under Ruberto for the liberation of the city, all of whom were thanked and accepted by him. Hearing of these preparations, the Duke withdrew from the vicinity of Rome, while awaiting reinforcements sent him by his father under the command of his brother Federigo, thinking that if he lay further off, Ruberto would be less bold in coming to attack him. But Ruberto, when he saw that his men-at-arms were in number almost equal to the Duke's, and his infantry superior, marched from Rome in order of battle, and pitched his camp at a distance of about two miles from the enemy. The Duke, finding, contrary to his expectation, that his adversaries were upon him, recognised that he must either fight, or flee as though defeated. Wherefore, not to discredit his royal birth, he felt himself as it were obliged to fight, and confronting the enemy, drew up his troops in the order approved in those days, and joined battle. The combat lasted till noon, and was fought with more spirit than any that for fifty years had been waged in Italy. For there fell, both sides counted, more than a thousand men. The issue was glorious for the Church, whose numerous infantry so harassed the Duke's men-at-arms that these were forced to retreat, and the Duke himself would have been captured had he not been rescued by a troop of horsemen who had formed part of the Turkish forces in Otranto, but were now fighting for him. On obtaining this victory, Ruberto returned triumphant to Rome. His triumph was, however, to be brief, for having in the heat of battle drunk much water, it brought on a flux, which within a few

days caused his death. His remains received every 1482.
honour at the hands of the Pope. After his victory the Pope at once sent Count Girolamo to Città di Castello, to see whether he could recover that town for Messer Lorenzo, and also to sound the city of Rimini. For inasmuch as Ruberto Malatesta had left at his death one son only, of tender years, and under the guardianship of his mother, the Pope thought he might easily get possession of that city, and he would have succeeded in doing so had not the lady been protected by the Florentines, who interposed their forces in such a manner that neither against Castello nor against Rimini was he able to effect anything.

§ 24. While these events were happening in Romagna and at Rome, the Venetians had seized Ficcarolo, and moved their army across the Po. The camp of the Duke of Milan and the Marquis of Ferrara was in confusion; for Federigo, Lord of Urbino, falling ill, had caused himself to be carried for treatment to Bologna, and there had died. The fortunes of the Marquis seemed therefore to be on the wane, while the hopes entertained by the Venetians of possessing Ferrara grew higher from day to day. On the other hand, the King and the Florentines were using all efforts to bend the Pope to their wishes, and having failed to coerce him by arms, were now threatening him with the Council which the Emperor had proclaimed was to meet at Basle. Accordingly, through the mediation of the Imperial envoys who were then in Rome, and of the leading Cardinals, who desired that the war should cease, the Pope was persuaded and constrained to think of peace and of the union of Italy. Thus, partly

1482. from fear, partly because he saw that the aggrandisement of the Venetians would be the ruin of the Church and of Italy, he was prevailed upon to make terms with the League, and sent his Nuncios to Naples, where a new League, to last for five years, was concluded between the Pope, the King, the Duke of Milan, and the Florentines, with leave to the Venetians to join it if they chose. This settled, the Pope intimated to the Venetians that they must desist from making war on Ferrara. So far, however, from complying, they prosecuted the war with increased ardour, and after routing the forces of the Duke and the Marquis at Argenta, got so close to Ferrara that they pitched their camp in the park of the Marquis.

1483. § 25. Seeing that the Marquis must receive substantial aid without further delay, the League now sent forward the Duke of Calabria with his own and the Papal forces to Ferrara, whither the Florentines followed with all their troops. To regulate the operations of the war, a Council was held at Cremona, at which the Pope's Legate, the Count Girolamo, the Duke of Calabria, Signor Lodovico, Lorenzo de' Medici, and many other Italian Princes were present, and the plans for the coming campaign were arranged. All being agreed that there was no better way of succouring Ferrara than by a vigorous diversion, it was proposed that Signor Lodovico should be the first to open the war against the Venetians on behalf of the Duchy of Milan. But to this Lodovico would not consent, fearing to draw upon himself hostilities which he might not be able to put an end to when he wished. It was therefore settled that the main body of the

League army should remain in camp at Ferrara, but 1483.
that a force of four thousand men-at-arms should be detached against the Venetians, who numbered two thousand two hundred horsemen and six thousand foot. The League, however, considered that the first thing to be done was to destroy the fleet which the Venetians had on the Po. This they attacked near Bondeno, and defeated with a loss to the enemy of over two hundred galleys. In which engagement Messer Antonio Giustiniano, who commanded the fleet, was taken prisoner.

Seeing all Italy combined against them, the Venetians, to support their credit, had taken into their service the Duke of Lorraine with two hundred men-at-arms, and after this defeat they sent him forward with a division of their army to confront their enemies, while the remainder of their forces under Ruberto of San Severino crossed the Adda and drew near Milan, shouting the names of the Duke and of Madonna Bona, his mother; for, believing Signor Lodovico and his Government to be hated in Milan, they hoped in this way to stir up insurrection there. Their approach at first created much alarm, and roused the city to arms. The result, however, was contrary to what the Venetians intended; for this insult caused Signor Lodovico to give that adhesion to the League which before he had refused. Whereupon, leaving the Marquis of Ferrara four thousand horsemen and two thousand foot to defend his own dominions, the Duke of Calabria, with twelve thousand horse and five thousand foot, entered the district of Bergamo, thence passed into that of Brescia, and finally into that of Verona, depriving all three cities of nearly the whole of their territories. This the

1483. Venetians were unable to prevent, it being as much as Signor Ruberto could do to save the cities themselves. Meanwhile the Marquis of Ferrara had recovered a great part of his own possessions, for his adversary the Duke of Lorraine, with only two thousand horse and a thousand foot, could offer no resistance. Throughout the summer of the year 1483 the war was continued with results favourable to the League.

1484. § 26. The winter passed in inactivity, but in the spring of the following year the armies again took the field. To make short work with their enemy, the League had now concentrated all its forces, and had the war been prosecuted with the same vigour as in the previous summer, the Venetians might have been completely stripped of their possessions in Lombardy. For the Duke of Lorraine, whose engagement, which was for a year only, had expired, having gone home, their strength was reduced to six thousand horsemen and five thousand foot, while they had against them thirteen thousand horsemen and six thousand foot. But, as often happens when many persons of equal authority are brought together, the dissensions of the League gave victory to the enemy. Upon the death of Federigo Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, whose influence had kept the Duke of Calabria and Signor Lodovico on good terms, misunderstandings and consequent jealousies began to grow up between these two. For Gian Galeazzo, being now of an age to assume the government of his State, and being affianced to a daughter of the Duke of Calabria, the Duke was desirous that his son-in-law, and no longer Signor Lodovico, should rule in Milan. Lodovico, knowing

this to be the Duke's desire, was resolved to give him no opportunity to carry it out; while the Venetians, being aware of this disposition on the part of Lodovico, thought they might turn it to account, and, as was their wont, regain by peace what they had lost in war. Wherefore, after secret negotiations had passed between him and them, an accord was concluded in the month of August 1484. When this came to the knowledge of the other parties to the League they were greatly incensed, more especially when they found that they had to restore those territories they had taken from the Venetians, and yet allow Venice to retain Rovigo and the Polesine, which had been wrested by her from the Marquis of Ferrara, and over which she was to resume all those rights she had anciently exercised. It seemed to all that they had been carrying on a war on which they had spent much, and wherein, while it lasted, they had gained honour, but which was to end in disgrace, since the territories they had taken were to be restored, and those they had lost were not to be recovered. But, exhausted by the charges of the war, and not choosing, where the treachery and ambition of others were concerned, to try Fortune further, they were forced to accept this peace. 1484.

§ 27. While things followed this course in Lombardy, Messer Lorenzo, on behalf of the Pope, was laying close siege to Città di Castello, hoping to expel Niccolò Vitelli, whom, to obtain the Pope's adherence, the League had thrown over. But while the siege proceeded the partisans of Niccolò within the town made a sally, and fought and routed the besiegers. Whereupon the Pope summoned Count Girolamo from

1484. Lombardy to Rome that he might recruit his forces, and then proceed to Città di Castello to renew the siege; but afterwards, reflecting that it might be more for his interest to win Niccolò over by peaceful means than to resume hostilities, he came to terms with him, and did his best to effect a reconciliation between him and his rival, Messer Lorenzo. To which course he was impelled, not so much by any love of peace as by the dread of fresh disturbances; for he saw ill blood brewing between the Orsini and the Colonnesi. During the war with the Pope, the King of Naples had taken the Lordship of Tagliacozzo from the Orsini, and given it to the Colonnesi, who had sided with him; but on peace being concluded between the Pope and the King, the Orsini, under the terms of the treaty, sought it back. The Pope repeatedly notified to the Colonnesi that they must restore it, but so far from being moved either by the prayers of the Orsini, or the threats of the Pope, to make restitution, they gave the Orsini new cause of offence by pillage and other like outrages. Whereupon the Pope, unable to endure them longer, combining his own forces with those of the Orsini, fell upon them, sacking their houses in Rome, and slaying or making prisoners any who ventured to defend them. He likewise seized on most of their strongholds throughout the country, so that it was not by peace, but by one of the factions being crushed, that these tumults were stilled.

§ 28. At Genoa and in Tuscany things were not yet quieted; for the Florentines kept Count Antonio da Marciano with his men-at-arms on the confines of Sarzana, and, while the war lasted in Lombardy, har-

assed the inhabitants with incursions and skirmishes; 1484.
and in Genoa the Archbishop Pagolo Fregoso had made himself Lord of the city, casting the Doge Battistino Fregoso, who had trusted him, into prison, with his wife and children. The Venetian fleet also had attacked the Kingdom of Naples, and after seizing Gallipoli had harried other places in the neighbourhood. But on the conclusion of peace in Lombardy all disturbances ceased except in Tuscany and Rome. For five days after the treaty was proclaimed, whether from having reached the natural limit of his life, or from vexation at the settlement come to, to which he was most adverse, Pope Sixtus died, leaving at peace that Italy which, while he lived, he had kept always at war.

On his death, Rome was at once in arms. Count Girolamo returning with his troops encamped close by the Castle of St. Angelo. The Orsini were in fear that the Colonnesi would seek to avenge their recent wrongs. The Colonnesi demanded back their houses and strongholds. Hence within a few days' time there followed murders, fires, and pillaging in many parts of the city. But on the Cardinals urging Count Girolamo to make over the Castle of St. Angelo to them, depart to his own States, and free Rome from his troops, he, desiring to stand well with the future Pope, obeyed, surrendered the Castle to the College, and withdrew to Imola. The Cardinals being freed from this fear, and the Barons deprived of the support which in their feuds with one another they looked to have from the Count, the business of creating a new Pope was proceeded with, and, after some contention, Giambattista Cibò, Cardinal of Molfetto, by birth a Genoese, was chosen. He assumed the name of Innocent VIII., and being of

1484. an easy, quiet, and kindly disposition, caused arms to be laid aside, and for the time gave tranquillity to Rome.

§ 29. After the peace of Lombardy the Florentines could not remain at rest, for they thought it shame and disgrace to be ousted from the fortress of Sarzana by a mere private gentleman. And since it was stipulated in the conditions of the peace that they might not only demand back what they had lost, but also might make war on any who hindered its recovery, they began forthwith to provide money and soldiers to enable them to enforce their rights. Whereupon Agostino Fregoso, by whom Sarzana had been seized, perceiving that he could not by himself support so great a war, made a gift of Sarzana to the Bank of San Giorgio.

As I shall have occasion to make frequent mention of San Giorgio and the Genoese, it seems to me not out of place here to say something of the usages and institutions of Genoa, it being one of the chief cities of Italy. When, after that momentous war which many years ago they waged on one another, the Genoese made peace with the Venetians, their Republic being unable to repay those citizens who during the war had lent it large sums of money, ceded to them the revenues of the Customs, on the understanding that every creditor in proportion to the amount of his claim, and by way of interest on his capital, should share in these revenues till such time as complete repayment had been made by the State; and assigned them the palace which stands over the Custom-house as their place of meeting. These creditors accordingly established among them-

selves a form of government, creating a Council of a hundred of their number to deliberate on public business, with a Syndicate of eight citizens who, as head over all the others, should give effect to their deliberations. Their claims they divided into separate shares, to which they gave the name *luoghi*, and for the whole Society they took the title San Giorgio. After their system of management had been thus arranged, new wants were felt by the Civil Government, and recourse was again had to San Giorgio for help, which that body, being rich and well administered, was able to afford. The Civil Government, on the other hand, as at first it had ceded the Customs, now began to mortgage its territories by way of security for further loans. So that, taking its origin in the necessities of the Community and the helpfulness of San Giorgio, the system was carried so far, that the administration of most of the towns and territories subject to Genoese rule fell into the hands of this Corporation, which, without interference on the part of the State, rules and defends these possessions through governors chosen by public suffrage and sent thither year by year. Hence it has resulted that the citizens of Genoa have withdrawn their affection from the State Government, as merely a form of despotism, and transferred it to San Giorgio as an institution well and equitably administered. Hence also originate the easy and frequent changes of rulers, wherein now a fellow-citizen, now a foreigner obtains obedience, for these changes affect the Civil Government only, and not San Giorgio. So that when the Dogeship of the city is contested between the Fregosi and the Adorni, since it is only the Civil Government that is involved, the majority of the 1484.

1484. citizens stand aloof, and leave the office as a prey to the victor; the only way in which the Company of San Giorgio intervenes on such occasions being to bind the new Doge by oath to observe its laws, which, up to the present hour, have never been altered. For inasmuch as this corporation possesses arms, money, and government, it would be impossible to tamper with its laws without causing a certain and dangerous insurrection.

That among the same citizens, and within the circuit of the same city, freedom should thus be found co-existing with despotism, honesty with corruption, law with licence, is in truth a singular combination, such as in their many fanciful and visionary Republics the philosophers have never dreamed of. But it is this institution alone that keeps Genoa replete with ancient and venerable usages. And were it ever to happen, as in the course of time there is all likelihood that it may, that San Giorgio should become possessed of the whole of this city, that would be a Republic more remarkable even than the Venetian.

§ 30. Agostino Fregoso, therefore, ceded Sarzana to this Company of San Giorgio, which accepted it willingly, and for its defence forthwith launched a fleet, and sent troops to Pietrasanta to prevent assistance reaching the Florentine army now encamped close to Sarzana. The Florentines, on their part, were most desirous to occupy Pietrasanta, for without possession of that stronghold, lying as it does between Pisa and Sarzana, the acquisition of Sarzana alone would be much less advantageous. There was, however, no reasonable pretext for them to assail Pietrasanta, unless hindered by its citizens, or by others within its walls,

in the attack on Sarzana. That this might happen, 1484.
they sent from Pisa to the camp at Sarzana a large supply of ammunition and victuals under a weak escort, in the expectation that the garrison of Pietrasanta would be less afraid to attack the convoy by reason of its weakness and more tempted by the greatness of the spoil. The device succeeded to their wishes. The men of Pietrasanta seeing so great a booty within their grasp, seized it, and thus afforded the Florentines legitimate occasion for attacking the town. Consequently, letting Sarzana stand over, they laid siege to Pietrasanta, which having many defenders made a stout resistance. After posting their artillery on the plain, the Florentines erected a bastion on the hill above the town so as to command it on that side also. Jacopo Guicciardini was Commissary of the army. While Pietrasanta was being thus attacked, the Genoese fleet took and burned the fortress of Vada, and landed soldiers who overran and pillaged the adjacent country. Bongianni Gianfigliazzi, who was sent with foot and horse to meet them, in some measure curbed their pride, and prevented them from raiding so freely as before. But the fleet, continuing to molest the Florentines, sailed to Leghorn, where with pontoons and other contrivances it was brought alongside the new tower, which for several days it battered with its guns. It being seen, however, that these made no impression, the fleet drew off with discredit.

§ 31. Meanwhile the siege of Pietrasanta was carried on so slackly that the besieged taking courage assailed and seized the bastion, gaining thereby a great name for valour, and creating such dismay in the Florentine army that it almost broke up of itself, and fell back

1484. four miles from the town. Whereupon those in command decided that, as it was now October, the troops should go into winter-quarters, and be kept ready for a renewed attack in the spring. When word of this mishap reached Florence, the heads of the State were extremely displeased, and, to restore the credit and strength of their army, forthwith appointed Antonio Pucci and Bernardo del Nero as new Commissaries, who, taking with them a great sum of money, repaired to the camp and represented to those in command the indignation that would be felt by the Signory, the Magistrates, and the whole city, were the troops not at once led back to the walls of Pietrasanta, and the disgrace that would rest upon them if so many Captains and so strong an army, with only a feeble garrison to oppose them, were unable to carry so inconsiderable and weak a town. They also set forth the immediate and future advantages which might be hoped from its capture in such glowing colours, that the minds of all were kindled to resume the siege. But before everything else they were determined to recover the bastion. In achieving this, it was seen how great an influence kindliness, cordiality, pleasant words, and a friendly bearing exert over the minds of soldiers. For Antonio Pucci, by exhorting one, holding out promises to another, grasping this man's hand, and clapping another on the back, led them on to the assault with a fury so irresistible that the bastion was carried at a rush. Yet the affair was not without loss, Count Antonio da Marciano being killed by a cannon shot. This defeat so dismayed the men of Pietrasanta that they began to talk of surrender, whereupon, that the matter might be concluded with more distinction,

Lorenzo de' Medici thought fit to come to the camp in person, where, not many days after his arrival, he received the submission of the town. Winter having now set in, the Captains resolved to proceed no further with the enterprise at that season, but to wait for spring, more especially as the pestilential air of the past autumn had greatly weakened the army, many of whose leaders were sorely stricken. Among others, Antonio Pucci and Bongianni Gianfigliazzi not merely sickened but died, to the extreme grief of every one, such popularity had Antonio acquired by his behaviour at Pietrasanta. After the Florentines got possession of Pietrasanta, the Lucchesi sent envoys to claim it, alleging that as a town formerly belonging to their Republic, it fell within the covenants of their treaty with Florence, whereby each was to restore to the original Lord all the towns it had taken from the other. The Florentines did not deny that it had been so stipulated, but said they knew not whether under the treaty they were then negotiating with Genoa they might not have to cede Pietrasanta to the Genoese, and till that was settled could not dispose of it; but in the event of their having to restore it to Lucca, that city would have to consider how the Florentines were to be compensated for charges they had been put to, and loss sustained by the death of so many of their citizens. When the Lucchesi had provided for this, they might reasonably ask to have Pietrasanta given up to them. 1484.

The whole winter was spent in negotiations for peace between the Genoese and the Florentines, these being carried on at Rome through the Pope as mediator. But no settlement being come to, the Florentines would have renewed the attack on Sarzana in the beginning of

spring had they not been hindered by war breaking out between the Pope and King Ferrando of Naples, and also by the illness of Lorenzo de' Medici. For besides suffering from gout, inherited from his father, Lorenzo was now visited by agonising pains in the stomach, obliging him to resort to baths for treatment.

1485. § 32. The chief cause of delay, however, was the war, which originated as follows. The city of Aquila was subject to the Kingdom of Naples, but under conditions rendering it almost a free town. The Count of Montorio was held in high esteem by its citizens. The Duke of Calabria, who lay with his troops near the Tronto, under colour of quelling certain disturbances that had arisen among the people in these parts, but having it also in his mind to reduce Aquila to complete submission to the King, sent for the Count of Montorio as though desiring to employ him in the matters he had on hand. The Count, entertaining no suspicions, obeyed, but on coming into the Duke's presence was by him made prisoner and sent to Naples. When this was known in Aquila, the whole town was infuriated, the citizens rose in arms, and slew the King's Commissary, Antonio Concinello, along with certain others known to be partisans of the King, while to have a protector in their revolt, they raised the Standard of the Church, and sent envoys to the Pope surrendering Aquila, and themselves with it, to him, and calling upon him to aid them as his own subjects against the King's tyranny. The Pope, who, for reasons both public and personal, hated the King, courageously undertook their defence, and engaged Signor Ruberto of Sanseverino, then on bad terms with the Milanese Government and

out of employ, as his Captain, and brought him in hot haste to Rome. He further exhorted all the friends and kinsmen of the Count of Montorio to rebel against the King; whereupon the Princes of Altemura, Salerno, and Bisignano took arms. Finding himself assailed by this sudden war, the King applied for aid to the Florentines and to the Duke of Milan. The Florentines were in doubt what course to follow, thinking it hard to give up their own enterprise to engage in another's, and dangerous to appear again in arms against the Church. Nevertheless, being bound by their League, they set honour above convenience and safety, and taking the Orsini into their service, sent the whole of their forces, under the Count of Pitigliano, towards Rome to support the King. The King, separating his army into two divisions, sent one of these, under the Duke of Calabria, to join the Florentine forces and oppose the army of the Church; while with the other, which he retained under his own command, he withstood the Barons. By both armies the war was prosecuted with varying fortune, but in the end the King remained everywhere victorious, and in August of the year 1486, through envoys sent by the King of Spain, a peace was concluded, to which the Pope, finding Fortune unkind, and not choosing to tempt her further, gave his consent. In this peace all the powers of Italy were joined, with the single exception of the Genoese, they being left out, at once as rebels against the State of Milan, and as usurpers of Florentine territory. After peace was concluded, Signor Ruberto of Sanseverino, who in the war had proved no faithful friend to the Pope, and no formidable foe to his enemies, leaving Rome in disgrace, was pursued by the soldiers 1485-1486.

1486. of the Duke and of the Florentines. Seeing after he had passed Cesena that his pursuers gained upon him, he hastened his flight, and with less than a hundred horsemen escaped to Ravenna. Of the rest of his troops some were taken into service by the Duke, others slain by the peasantry. When peace was proclaimed, the King was reconciled with the Barons, but put to death Jacopo Coppola and Antonello of Aversa with his sons, as having, during the war, revealed his secrets to the Pope.

1487. § 33. In the course of this war the Pope had noted with what alacrity and zeal the Florentines stood by their friends; so that although from his Genoese leaning, and because they had helped the King, he at first disliked them, he now began to esteem them, and to treat their envoys with more than ordinary favour. This benevolent disposition being observed by Lorenzo de' Medici, was by him studiously fostered, for he thought it would greatly enhance his reputation if to the friendship of the King he could add that of the Pope. The latter had a son named Francesco, and wishing to provide him with estates and with friends, so that when he himself died the youth might still be able to maintain his position, he could think of no one in Italy to whom he might more advantageously ally him than to Lorenzo de' Medici. Accordingly he persuaded Lorenzo to give Francesco one of his daughters to wife. This alliance secured, the Pope was desirous that the Genoese should of their own accord surrender Sarzana to the Florentines, showing them that they could not honestly keep what Agostino had sold to the Florentines, nor could Agostino

transfer to San Giorgio what was no longer his own. 1487.
These counsels, however, were disregarded. Indeed, while negotiations were being carried on at Rome, the Genoese armed many of their ships, and before the Florentines knew what was being done, landed three thousand foot-soldiers and attacked the fortress of Sarzanello, standing above Sarzana, and held by the Florentines. The adjoining village they sacked and burned, and planting their artillery close to the fortress, battered it unceasingly. This attack came on the Florentines suddenly and by surprise, but they speedily assembled their forces at Pisa under Virginio Orsini, at the same time making complaint to the Pope that while he was holding out prospects of peace the Genoese had taken it upon them to begin war. They then sent Pietro Corsini to Lucca to keep that town faithful; while, to ascertain how the Venetians were disposed, they despatched Pagolantonio Soderini to Venice. They also sought aid from the King and from Lord Lodovico, but got it from neither, the King alleging that he stood in fear of the Turkish fleet, while Lodovico, though he promised to send assistance, put off doing so on various frivolous pretexts. For thus it happens that in their wars the Florentines almost always stand alone, finding none to second them with that goodwill wherewith they themselves assist others. But since it was no new thing for them to see themselves deserted by their allies, on this occasion too they were nowise disheartened, but raising a strong army, sent it against the enemy under Jacopo Guicciardini and Piero Vettori, who pitched their camp on the banks of the Magra torrent.

Meanwhile Sarzanello was hard pressed by the

1487. enemy, who assailed it by mines and every other contrivance they could devise. The Commissaries, therefore, determined at all hazards to relieve it, nor did the enemy decline an engagement. Battle being joined, the Genoese were routed, and Messer Luigi del Fiesco and many other leaders of the hostile army were taken prisoners. This reverse, however, did not dismay the garrison of Sarzana into surrender; on the contrary, they stubbornly continued their defence, and the Florentine Commissaries being equally persistent in their attack, the contest was maintained with much spirit on both sides. The siege being thus protracted, Lorenzo de' Medici thought it advisable to visit the camp in person. On his arrival the courage of our soldiers was redoubled, while the Sarzanese, seeing the obstinacy of the Florentines in assailing and the slowness of the Genoese in affording succour, were so disheartened, that of their own accord, and without treating for terms, they threw themselves into Lorenzo's arms, and, submitting to the Florentine rule, were, with the exception of a few who had been the authors of the revolt, leniently dealt with. While the siege went on, Signor Lodovico had sent his men-at-arms to Pontremoli to make a show of coming to our assistance; but through secret agencies in Genoa he incited the faction opposed to the existing Government of that city to rise against their rulers, and with the support of his troops give themselves over to the Duke of Milan.

§ 34. About this time Boccolino, a citizen of Osimo in the March of Ancona, stirred up that town to rebel against the Pope, and assumed its Lordship. After many futile attempts for its recovery, Boccolino, at the

instance of Lorenzo de' Medici, consented to surrender 1487.
the town to the Pope. Subsequently he came to Florence, where he lived for a time in great honour under Lorenzo's protection. He then went to Milan, where, so far from receiving the like honourable treatment, he was put to death by Signor Lodovico. In a war waged about this time between the Germans and the Venetians, the latter were defeated in a battle fought in the neighbourhood of Trent, in which their Captain, Ruberto of San Severino, was slain. After this defeat, with their usual felicity, they effected a treaty of peace with the Germans, as favourable for their Republic as though, instead of being vanquished, they had come off victors.

There arose also about this time serious troubles in Romagna. Francesco d'Orso of Forlì, who exercised great authority in that city, came to be so much distrusted by Count Girolamo that the latter often threatened his life. Francesco, who in consequence lived in constant fear, was counselled by his friends and kinsmen to be beforehand with the Count, and by slaying him, escape from his own danger. This resolved, and the minds of the conspirators nerved to the execution of their design, they chose the market-day of Forlì as the time to effect it, for as on that day many of their country friends came into the town, they thought they would have their help without need to summon them. It was the month of May, at which season it is the habit of most Italians to sup by daylight. The conspirators decided that the fittest time for executing their purpose was after supper, when, as the Count's servants would be at their meal, he himself was likely to be alone in his chamber. This settled,

1487. Francesco came at the appointed hour to the Palace, and leaving his companions below, ascended to the chamber where the Count was, and bade the servant-in-waiting tell his master he desired to speak with him. Francesco was admitted, and finding the Count alone, after a few words of feigned conversation, slew him, and summoning his companions, slew the attendant also. It so chanced that the Captain of the town with a few of his men arrived at this moment to speak with the Count, and these likewise on entering the Palace were slain by the Count's murderers. After which butchery they threw the Count's body from a window, and raised the cry of '*Church and Liberty*,' when the whole people, who hated Girolamo for his greed and cruelty, took arms, and, sacking the Palace, made the Countess Caterina and all her children prisoners. To complete their work nothing was now wanting but to get possession of the citadel, and as the Castellan refused to surrender it, the conspirators desired the Countess to use her influence to persuade him. This she promised to do if they would allow her to enter the citadel, leaving her children as hostages for her good faith. Trusting her words, they allowed her to enter, but no sooner had she got within the walls than she menaced them with death and every sort of punishment for murdering her husband; and when they replied, threatening to murder her children also, she told them she had with her the means to replace them. The conspirators dismayed by her firmness, finding they were not supported by the Pope, and hearing that Signor Lodovico, the uncle of the Countess, was sending soldiers to her assistance, went off to Città di Castello, taking with them such of their

possessions as they could carry away. Whereupon the Countess, resuming the reins of government, avenged her husband's murder with unsparing cruelty. On being informed of the death of the Count, the Florentines thought it a good opportunity to get back the stronghold of Piancaldoli, which some time before the Count had taken from them, and, sending their troops there, succeeded in recovering it, though with the loss of La Cecca, their famous engineer. 1487.

§ 35. After this outbreak in Romagna, another no less serious followed in the same province. Galeotto, Lord of Faenza, had to wife the daughter of Messer Giovanni Bentivoglio, Prince of Bologna. This lady, whether through jealousy, or because she was ill-used by Galeotto, or out of sheer wickedness, conceived such hatred for her husband that she resolved to deprive him at a stroke both of life and Lordship. Accordingly, feigning sickness, she retired to bed, after giving orders that when Galeotto came, as was his custom, to visit her, he should be murdered by certain persons in her confidence, whom, to this end, she concealed in her chamber. This scheme she had imparted to her father, who was in great hopes that when his son-in-law was got rid of, he himself would become Lord of Faenza. At the time appointed for the murder, Galeotto entered his wife's chamber, where, when he had sat a while talking with her, the murderers rushing forth from their places of concealment despatched him before he could make resistance. After his death there was great tumult and confusion. His wife and her little son Astorre fled to the citadel. The people took arms. Messer Giovanni Bentivoglio, 1488.

1488. accompanied by a certain Bergamino, a condottiere in the service of the Duke of Milan, and guarded by many armed followers, entered Faenza, where Antonio Boscoli, the Florentine Commissary, also was. While, amid the turmoil, these chiefs were debating who was to govern the city, the men of the Val di Lamone, learning what had happened, rushed in a body into the town, and falling with their weapons upon Messer Giovanni and Bergamino, slew Bergamino and made Messer Giovanni their prisoner; then shouting '*Astorre and the Florentines*,' they recommended their city to the Florentine Commissary. This occurrence, when reported in Florence, grieved every one, nevertheless, they caused Giovanni and his daughter to be released, and with the consent of the whole people took over charge of Astorre and the city of Faenza.

Nor were these the only disturbances that happened on the close of the great wars between the leading powers of Italy. For a period of many years riots were continually breaking out in Romagna, in the March, and in Siena, of which from their less importance I think it needless to give particulars. It is to be said, however, that after the departure of the Duke of Calabria at the end of the war of 1478, the commotions in Siena were very frequent, and that after many shifts of fortune in which now the People and now the Nobles got the upper hand, victory at last remained with the Nobles, among whom Pandolfo and Jacopo Petrucci obtained supreme authority, becoming, the one by his prudence, the other by his courage, almost Princes in that city.

§ 36. From the termination of the campaign against

Sarzana down to the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492 the Florentines lived in great felicity. For when the arms of Italy, stayed by his prudence and authority, had been laid aside, Lorenzo turned his mind to the aggrandisement of himself and his city. His eldest son Piero he wedded to Alfonsina, daughter of the Cavaliere Orsini. For his second son Giovanni he obtained the dignity of the Cardinalate, a circumstance the more notable from it being wholly without precedent that a boy under fourteen years of age should be raised to that high station. This dignity was meant as a ladder whereby the House might mount to Heaven, as indeed it proved in the times that came after. For his third son Giuliano, by reason of the boy's tender age, and of his own early death, Lorenzo was unable to secure any signal good fortune. One of his daughters he married to Jacopo Salviati, a second to Francesco Cibò, a third to Piero Ridolfi; the fourth, whom, to keep the family united, he would have married to her cousin Giovanni de' Medici, died young. In his other private affairs, he was, as regards his mercantile transactions, most unhappy, for through the irregularities of his agents, who conducted his business more in the style of Princes than of mere merchants, his substance was in many quarters so wasted, that the State had to come to his assistance with a great sum of money. Whereupon, not to incur further risks of a like nature, abandoning mercantile pursuits, he took to acquiring landed property as a more secure and stable source of wealth. Accordingly he bought lands in the country round Prato, in the Pisan territory, and in the Val di Pesa, which, both for their revenues and for the style and magnificence of their buildings, were fitter

1487-1492.

for a Prince than for a private citizen. He next busied himself in enlarging and beautifying the city, causing new streets to be laid out, and houses built in many parts of it which before had lain vacant and neglected; whereby our town was extended and embellished. And that life might be more secure and peaceful throughout his dominions, and that he might keep, and fight, his foes at a distance, he erected among the mountains towards Bologna the stronghold of Firenzuola; while towards Siena he began to build Poggio Imperiale, which he made extremely strong. By the acquisition of Pietrasanta and Sarzana he had closed the coast road from Genoa against enemies. Moreover, by grants and subsidies he kept the Baglioni in Perugia and the Vitelli in Città di Castello his friends, while the government of Faenza was entirely in his hands. All which arrangements served, as it were, as strong ramparts to his city. Furthermore, in these times of peace, he kept the country always in festival, with jousts and frequent pageants representing the victories and triumphs of antiquity. The chief aim of his policy was to maintain the city in ease, the people united, and the nobles honoured. He had a marvellous liking for every man who excelled in any branch of art. He favoured the learned, as Messer Agnolo da Montepulciano, Messer Cristofano Landini, and Messer Demetrio the Greek can bear sure testimony; whence it came that the Count Giovanni della Mirandola, a man almost divine, withdrew himself from all the other countries of Europe through which he had travelled, and attracted by the munificence of Lorenzo, took up his abode in Florence. In Architecture, Music, and Poetry he took extraordinary delight. Many poetical

pieces, not only composed but also commented upon by him, are preserved. That the youths of Florence might exercise themselves in learned studies, he opened a University in the city of Pisa, whither he brought the most eminent scholars then to be found in Italy. For Mariano of Ghinazano, a brother of the Order of Sant' Agostino, in consideration of his excellence as a preacher, he built a monastery in the neighbourhood of Florence. He was favoured in the highest degree both by Fortune and by God, so that all his public enterprises had a happy issue, and all his enemies an unhappy end. For besides the conspiracy of the Pazzi, Battista Frescobaldi had plotted to slay him in the Church of the Carmine, and Baldinotto of Pistoia had formed a like plot to be executed in Lorenzo's country-house at Careggi; but each of these conspirators, together with all privy to their designs, suffered righteous punishment for their wickedness.

Lorenzo's splendid manner of living, his sagacity and good fortune were recognised with admiration not by the Princes of Italy only, but also by those of distant lands. Matthias, King of Hungary, gave many signs of the love he bore him; the Soldan sent him ambassadors, and loaded him with gifts; the Grand Turk gave up Bernardo Bandini, his brother's murderer, into his hands. These attentions of foreign Princes greatly added to his reputation in Italy, which was every day increased by his prudence. For he was eloquent and subtle in discourse, wise in resolving, and prompt and bold in executing. Nor can any vices be charged against him dark enough to obscure his many and great virtues, though it must be said that he was

marvellously addicted to amorous intrigues, and took more pleasure in the company of the witty and satirical, and in puerile sports, than seemed befitting in a person of his station, being often seen taking part with his boys and girls in their childish games. Wherefore, noting in him so much strength of character and such levity of demeanour, it seemed as though two natures were united in him in an almost impossible combination.

His last years were attended with many anxieties, caused by the malady whereby he was so grievously afflicted. For he was tormented by intolerable pains in the stomach, growing so violent as to cause his death in April of 1492, in the forty-fourth year of his age. Never was there any man, not in Florence merely, but in all Italy, who died with such a name for prudence, or whose loss was so much mourned by his country. That the greatest calamities were to follow on his death, Heaven itself declared by many and patent signs. Among others, the topmost pinnacle of the Church of Santa Reparata was struck by a thunderbolt, with such violence that the greater part of it fell down, to the consternation and amazement of every one. All his fellow-citizens, therefore, mourned his death as did likewise all the Princes of Italy, who indeed gave manifest indications of their sorrow, for there was not one of them who did not by envoys sent to Florence express the grief they felt at so great a loss. Whether they had good cause for their grief was shown by what happened soon after. For Italy remaining bereft of his counsel, found no resource in those who survived him either to satisfy or to restrain the ambition of Lodovico Sforza, guardian of

the Duke of Milan. Wherefore no sooner was Lorenzo dead than all those evil seeds, which had he been living he would have known how to destroy, began to grow, and very soon ruined, and still continue to ruin Italy.

THE END

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